

# Man grows pineapple ... in Blaine?!

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Who grew a pineapple here in Blaine? No it's no Sponge-Bob SquarePants. It's local gardener Steve Gulczinski.

On March 30, 2010, not long after moving into a new home in Blaine, Steve and his wife, Sue Gulczinski, took a trip to Cub Foods at 12595 Central Ave NE, Blaine, where they bought a pineapple

"It was all beat up, and we actually bought it," Steve said.

After eating the pineapple, Steve was curious to see if he could get another pineapple to grow from the top of the fruit.

"I started growing a pineapple out of curiosity," he said. "I thought I'd just give it a try. I really wanted to see what would happen and if a pineapple would grow or not."

Steve said he's always had a bit of a green thumb. He received all of his knowledge of gardening from growing up on a farm in St. Anthony.

On his honeymoon in Florida with Sue, Steve bought a palm tree and brought it back to Minnesota. After 48 years, the tree is still alive and towers over the Gulczinskis' family room.

After their honeymoon, the Gulczinskis moved to their first home in Columbia Heights,

where they raised three children and Steve maintained a garden with a variety of plants and produce.

"He has always had success growing things," Sue said.

Steve eventually had success growing a pineapple — it finally matured this year, after 10-years.

Steve grew the pineapple in a pot in the couple's dimly lit living room using only Miracle Grow potting soil and four tomato stakes, and only watering it twice a month.

"We were so surprised we got a pineapple," Sue said. "He never did any of the things he was supposed to do. He just did it!"

Steve said gardening and the pineapple have been great ways to connect with his six grandchildren.

Every year on March 30, the Gulczinskis would celebrate the pineapple's birthday with their grandchildren, who would give the pineapple gifts by leaving ornaments and even "feeding" it gummy bears.

Steve also taught his grandchildren how to garden. Together they planted pumpkins and watermelon at the kids' home in Andover.

"Gardening is so much fun with the grandkids," he said. "It's relaxing, and it's so much fun to go outside with them and get some sunshine. I hope they

cherish these memories."

The Gulczinskis and their grandchildren also like to make puzzles, which currently decorate the garage of their home in The Lakes neighborhood, and play in a makeshift classroom in the garage where the grandchildren have acted as teachers.

"Steve loves gardening and doing all these things with the grandkids because he likes sharing things with them and doing active things," Sue said.

Steve said he wanted to keep his grandchildren active, because he thought children were spending too much time today in front of screens and not enough time outside or playing.

Steve suggests parents and teachers should get kids outside and gardening more at school or at home because it teaches them patience. One project he suggests is growing a pineapple.

"Kids should learn how much really goes into growing produce," Steve said. "When they grow it, they appreciate what they have more."

In the meantime, Steve is going to take the baby pineapple and plant the top of it, starting over again. He said after the mother plant produces one baby it dies.

"I'm going to do it the right way, and hopefully in 10 years I will have an even better pineapple," Steve said.

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Blaine resident Steve Gulczinski stands next to the pineapple he bought from Cub Foods. After 10 years of caring for it, a baby pineapple grew from the fruit.

Photo by Paige Kieffer



Blaine resident Steve Gulczinski recently finished growing a pineapple after 10 years from a pineapple he bought at Cub Foods.

Photo by Paige Kieffer



Ever since he started growing a pineapple 10 years ago, Blaine resident Steve Gulczinski's grandchildren have left gifts each year on the fruit's birthday.

Photo by Paige Kieffer