In the world of plants there are many shades of green; sometimes reds, yellows, and oranges. One of my favorite color combinations is seen in plants that are variegated. For every normally green plant, there seems to be a variegated counterpart. Variegated plants are often striped, but may also appear in irregular patterns of white, cream, yellow, and pink. Some variegated plants that I particularly like include the variegated cassava, the variegated pineapple, and variegated golden dewdrop.

I first saw a specimen of a variegated cassava while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer on the island nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While there was certainly lots of cassava cultivated as a crop, there was also this eye-catching variegated cassava that I saw in someone’s garden. Grown for its ornamental qualities, this shrub-like plant grows up to five feet tall and has green leaves with an irregular creamy-white to yellow variegation topped off with bright red stems. Easily grown from cuttings, a 12-inch piece placed in sterile potting medium will root in just a couple of weeks if not sooner. Before long, you will have dozens of new plants to pass to friends. They do best in full sun, and are fairly drought-tolerant. They do tend to die back if we have a winter frost, but will soon sprout back bigger and better than new.

If you like the tropical look of bromeliads, you will like the variegated pineapple. Sometimes seen in local nurseries, this spectacular ornamental pineapple has a green leaf edged in white and sometimes a pinkish tinge. The flower is very ornamental and red in color. The ornamental fruit produced is pinkish in color and provides a beautiful finishing touch to the plant. Provide this pineapple with some partial shade to protect its color. Multiple suckers will form at the base of the old plant that can be used for propagation. The top of the mature fruit can be used to start new plants as well.

One additional noteworthy variegated plant is a native - the variegated golden dewdrop. While the normal all-green version is a great plant, there are

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also colorful variegated cultivars in green and gold and green and white. Although these variegated versions flower and fruit less, the different foliage color really adds to the already great nature of this plant which features blue flowers and golden (yet poisonous) fruit. Variegated golden dewdrop cultivars do best in partial shade.

These are just a few of the variegated plants available on the market. As I mentioned before, there is a variegated version of just about any plant that you can think of - a variegated plant universe for collectors!

Resource: