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we like  
this guy

# A Vineyard *Grows* in Cleveland

How a community activist grew a patch of dirt into something truly worth toasting.



From left: The vineyard and possible future biocellar; local residents tend the grapes preharvest; the fruit of their labors; Frazier in his element.

→ **THE NEIGHBORHOOD** of Hough, in Cleveland, is full of empty lots and boarded-up houses—just about the last place you'd expect to see a vineyard. But that's what you'll find at the corner of East 66th and Hough Avenue: 14 rows of third-year vines. The Traminette and Frontenac grapes to be harvested this fall will soon be bottled under the label Château Hough.

This microappellation is the brainchild of 69-year-old Mansfield Frazier, who claims no enological expertise besides enthusiasm. ("I'm an expert at opening the bottle," he says.) Three years ago, when Cleveland chose to put \$500,000 in federal money toward vacant land reuse, Frazier was one of the first residents to apply for a grant. But instead of proposing an urban farm or community orchard, he submitted an application to grow grapes for wine. Frazier, a longtime activist and Hough resident, knew

**Frazier says each vine could generate ten \$10 bottles per year. "You can't get that off of bell peppers!"**

a vineyard would yield more profit than a garden. Wine grapes have a high dollar yield per acre; Frazier estimates that each of his 289 vines could generate ten \$10 bottles of wine per year: "You can't get that off of bell peppers!" Since the mission is to create long-term jobs for Hough residents—many of whom, like Frazier himself, are ex-cons—the more

profit the better. The city awarded the project \$18,000—one of the largest grants given.

Frazier also hopes to open a winery in the historic firehouse down the street, and to build a biocellar—a deconstructed house that retains its basement and is capped with a solar roof, functioning as a subterranean greenhouse. If he can raise enough money to convert the old Victorian next to the vineyard into a biocellar, he'll train his crew to grow crops like shiitake mushrooms.

He has won the support of U.S. Representative Marcia Fudge, who has—thanks to his efforts—introduced a bill that would fund biocellars and urban viticulture projects. Whatever the future holds, Frazier is pleased to have come this far. "People drive by the vineyard and say, 'My son helped you build this!'" he says. "They have a real sense of pride in this project."

—HANNAH WALLACE