

## Don't Water the Plants

An older man moved into his son and daughter-in-law's home. Shortly afterwards, his daughter-in-law noticed that someone (probably her father-in-law) was urinating in pots containing large indoor trees. What should she do?

**Who is this person?** What is the older man's background? Was urinating on trees out of doors a previous habit? What are the surrounding around the indoor trees (are there outdoor scenes to make him think he is outdoors)? Is he independent?

**Making use of abilities that remain.** It appears that he is mobile, and has some degree of independence. Can he read?

**Gather the evidence.** Have you asked him if he is urinating on the indoor trees? If so, what was his answer? What time does this happen? Is he also urinating in the toilet? Have you asked him to show you where the toilet is? If so, what did he say?

**Use the formula.** Does he have an infection? How is his eyesight? Is he bored? What things occupy his time and attention? Can he read? Does he follow written directions? (If so, will he follow directions such as "Please do not water the trees?") Is he angry about having to move into a new place?

**Solution.** The first thing is to make sure that he knows where the bathroom is, and to provide environmental supports (contrast between toilet and floor, labeling the door of the toilet if that helps, etc.) for using it. Written directions such as "Please do not water the trees" may help, along with putting doilies around the base of the trees (as a type of "man repellent"). Is this a conscious act? If so, talking about it might help. Is this a form of rebellion? If so, giving him meaningful activity and a role in the family might address his resentment.

**CLUE:** Where is his bathroom, and does he use it?