

Autumn 'itchy' time

Every year, around this time, I get itchy.

Now, we're not talking about an itch that could be remedied with a hot shower or a good scrubbing.

Nope, it's a psychological 'itch' where I want to get the outside things settled for the oncoming winter.

"Winter?!" you say. "What about fall?"

Okay, given the fact that fall only arrived at 11:09 p.m. last night, (who decides these dates and times anyway?), fall is my season to get prepared for the onslaught of winter.

And one of my biggest challenges is packing up the driving shed at home.

My urban friends have garden sheds to pack away all their tools and toys—riding lawn mowers, rototillers, pool stuff—you name it, it gets packed inside a plastic 10x12-foot garden shed with such precision that you couldn't put another garden trowel in there if your life depended on it.

Well, it's kinda the same with packing up the driving shed at home—only bigger toys... er, ahem, equipment.

For the past month, two loads of hay have been taking up space in the shed, and they were starting to bug me.

The bale elevator broke before they were unloaded, and parts are tough to find for an elevator late in the season, so I parked them in the shed, out of the weather.

Problem was, there were a number of other pieces of equipment that needed to be stored in the same place the wagons were occupying.

With no bale elevator, it was obvious we had to do it the old way—unload the bales by hand, and carry them into the hay mow.

The Sidekick gave me a helping hand Saturday, and more than 350 bales are now neatly packed away in the barn.

The best part—the shed was empty.

I started the tedious job of packing the equipment away, sometimes parking some of them with only an inch or two of space between them.

As I started moving the equipment into place, I was reminded of my dad. The fall transition of the shed was a job he loved. It meant we were almost finished our out-

Ted Brown



door chores in preparation of winter.

The hay baler went in first, then a wagon with all the mowers and other small equipment stacked on it, was parked alongside it. (I could just slip my fingers between the wagon and the baler—a perfect parking job!)

As the various implements rolled in, I left a space in which to park the Lil Red Rocket for the winter, and also paced off the space the tractors needed, to be available to clear snow from the yard.

And so it progressed. Other pieces of equipment were backed into the barn, one 12-foot wide, slipping through the 14-foot door with ease. I was almost delirious, as I watched the summer equipment disappearing into the barn, the shed, the back shed, out of sight and out of the elements.

Finally, I looked at the hay rake, sitting there forlornly waiting to be parked.

It had sat outside last winter, and all this summer as well. I'm not a fan of any equipment being stored outside, especially in the winter. It takes years off their life.

In my brain, the plan had been to park the rake in the back shed for the winter.

I hooked on, and backed the rake toward the door of the shed, aiming for the gaping hole of darkness in the shed.

I suddenly realized I'd had an oversight—the shed door is 10-feet wide.

The rake is 11 feet wide.

As I sit at my desk and compose this column, I'm subconsciously pondering how I can 're-pack' the shed, the barn and back shed to accommodate the solitary hay rake.

And I know it'll be this weekend's task, once again rearranging and re-packing the shed.

I'm just hoping The Sidekick doesn't plan on re-arranging the living room...

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