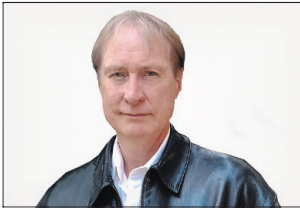


WHAT'S IN YOUR SHED?

ORGANIZING JOBS CAN OFFER A TREASURE-TROVE OF DISCOVERY, WRITES STEPHEN ILOTT



STEPHEN ILOTT
Column

"I don't go in there. I hear things."

The woman, eyes wide, crinkled the side of her mouth as if trying to bite her own nose. I had casually pointed down toward the end of her yard and asked, "What's in your shed?"

It was a substantial yard, something from the old days when a yard was a yard and big enough to toss around a Frisbee, a football, maybe even a boomerang. The kind of yard you could describe the end of as being, "down yonder."

The woman had called me in to tackle the downsiz-

ing prior to listing for sale.

I love digging into a house full of memories and sorting out heaps of stuff from the before times. Call me a masochist, but I really love dealing with jam-packed barns, lofty garages and especially mystery-filled old sheds. It's dirty work if left unattended for a few decades.

The critters move in and do what critters do. Sometimes you find treasures all forgotten and woven tightly into a solid, dusty mass.

The average shed is less

daunting. It mostly has stuff one needs on a regular basis. But often a lot of, "What the heck?" stuff as well. So here are some quick tips to get your shed in spring shape.

1. Lay down a tarp and empty it all out — everything.

2. Clean it top to bottom, every cob web, every chunk of dry sod, wash the walls, everything.

3. Install sturdy shelves to use vertical spaces. Store clear, rectangular, "marked" containers of all the small — stuff, gloves, hardware etc. Collect free salad containers from the grocery store. Give yourself a couple of empty ones for drop spots for loose stuff.

4. Review and dispose of toxic items properly.

5. Use the walls to hang tools (not ceilings), rakes etc. Be same-place consis-



Metroland file photo

Stephen Ilott never knows what he'll find during a shed organizing gig.

tent to find things fast later.

6. Use floor spaces for manoeuvrability. Drill a small hole in the bottoms of stacked recycling bins to kill the vacuum sucking when you try to pull them

apart.

7. Most importantly toss out the useless stuff — the solid bag of cement for starters. Don't put it all back.

Declutter your shed this

spring. It'll make life easier.

Stephen Ilott is a professional home organizer. He can be reached at sillott@cogeco.ca.

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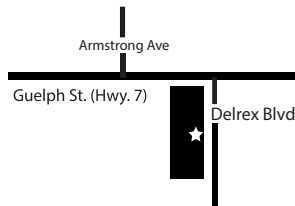
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