

Spring décor CLEANUP

Go beyond the traditional spring cleanup: de-thug!

BY KIMBERLEY SELDON



Having spent the entire weekend engaged in hard, but gratifying labour (planting my garden), I've come to the conclusion that nothing revives the soul and senses like shedding those cumbersome winter layers

on the first fine days of spring.

Wind at my back, soil between my fingers and flats of impatiens scattered on my lawn, I bend with enthusiasm to the task of weeding winter's free-loaders (my maple tree replants itself at an astonishing rate) and breathe in the new air. By Sunday night I'm aching but satisfied, my garden is well-tended and all is right with the world.

Our interior environment thrives in the very same way – through careful consideration and thoughtful attention. It's more than just cleaning – that's only part of it. It's also about eliminating the furniture, accessories and appliances that are no longer beautiful or useful. It's about "de-thugging."

De-thugging is a term that interior designer and author Alexandra Stoddard describes in her book *The Decoration of Houses*. Essentially de-thugging is inventory control. In the same way an inch off your waistline makes an old pair of jeans feel like a million dollars, so too will a few inches to spare in the cupboards make your home feel like a million dollars.

Getting started

First, gather an ample supply of bags and boxes, a marker and tape. Label several boxes: one for Garage Sale, one for Charity, one for Garbage – okay, maybe two for garbage.



Now, approach your mission like a business owner – you are in search of obsolete, broken or damaged inventory, and items that are duplicates. Kitchens and bathrooms are a good place to start, since they always seem to be overfull. Trust me, I consider myself to be a daring de-clutterer and just last month I discovered that I was hoarding no less than six Great Lash Mascaras in Very Black!

Address the room's most clogged areas first and ask yourself what you really spend time doing in this space. If you bake cookies only at holiday time, then maybe it's time to relocate or give away the 300 cookie cutters you've collected over the years. Be ruthless; something's got to go. Think of the money you'll make at your inventory clearance sale (otherwise known as a garage sale).

If you just can't part with anything, enlist the aid of a friend who has the confidence to tell you the purple polka dot fish pitcher from Jamaica is begging for its freedom. That's what friends are for.

Storage hints

Once you complete this thorough de-cluttering process, you may find that you don't need to spend money on expensive storage systems after all. I will, however, suggest you search for ways to hide storage in plain sight. An antique trunk can hold photo albums that are taking up valuable closet space. A skirted table or vintage suitcase will discreetly conceal your stash of Harlequin Romance novels near the fireplace where you actually read them.

If you store luggage in a closet, why not fill suitcases with gift wrap? When it's time to wrap a gift, you can conveniently move the suitcase to the wrapping area and you'll have everything you need close at hand. When vacation time rolls around, you can temporarily transfer the gift-wrap paraphernalia into a cardboard box.

Treat yourself to a well-organized and efficient living space. Then you'll have more time to spend in the garden. 🌿

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