

## **Feature Article - Managing Your Stash**

**By Alison Craven**

As I write this I'm wondering how many men are going to read it. In a way, this topic should be headed "secret women's business" . Perhaps we need one of those special sealed sections that always look so exciting in the newsagents but almost invariably turn out to be less so when you finally get home and hack it open with the scissors.

For some reason, most men don't understand a woman's need for a stash. Perhaps it's a genetic thing? Specifically we're talking a yarn stash here, but I seem to have inherited a need for a fabric stash as well. It's not the contents of the stash that's important, it's how you manage it that counts. A well managed stash is a valuable asset!

I'm often contacted by people in the process of downsizing. They have an enormous pile of yarns, patterns, knitting needles, crochet hooks and other assorted treasures that have been lovingly collected over many years. Suggestions from the man of the house to dump the lot in a charity bin are met with a mix of shock and horror: they obviously have no idea what all this stuff is for, or for that matter, of its monetary value. In today's dollars the combined stash could easily be worth as much as a small family car. In my case I'd say about two Pajeros' worth.

The first step in stash management is to separate the stash from the trash. Surprisingly, this is usually relatively easy. Yarns that are stained, faded or moth eaten can be instantly dispatched to the rubbish bin. Pattern books with pages missing should be

consigned to the recycling bin. Hubby may like to help you with this. By now he should be feeling smug and self righteous; he may even disappear for a while to gloat. This is good! You don't want him around for the fun part.

You may like to invite a friend around for the next bit. You can have a laugh and several cups of tea while you wade your way through all of these wonderful treasures.

Folders with plastic pockets are a great way to organise your knitting patterns. These can then be stored in your bookcase. Patterns, in good condition, that are excess to your needs can be donated to the Op shop. If hubby has returned, this is a good way to get rid of him again. The local Op shop won't need them; get him to drive to Traralgon , Sale or Lakes Entrance.

Now for the yarns! First of all get rid of the awful stuff. Some yarns are never going to come back into fashion. When Hubby gets back from the op shop he can take these to another Op shop that needs them; San Remo would be good.

Perhaps the most useful way to organize the rest is to sort them by ply. Now a fine sort to separate the pastels from the darker hues. Stored in this way, with complementary colours and plys together, you are more likely to be able to find the yarns you need to complete future projects.

There are lots of excellent storage containers available at the moment. Choose a system that best suits your needs. Don't forget to label each container clearly and protect your valuable yarns from moths and silverfish.

Hubby should be back by now so make him a cup of tea; he must be exhausted.

**About the Author:**

Alison is the author of two books, "Comfort Food: Recipes from My Mothers Kitchen" and "Handknitted Gifts". Alison has been working with natural fibres and yarns since the establishment of Stokesay Mohair Farm and Angora stud in 1995, and now runs two stores for knitters, spinners, felters and doll-makers: Stokesay Mohair Farm ([www.mohairfarm.biz](http://www.mohairfarm.biz)) and Knitting Yarns by Mail ([www.knittingyarns.com.au](http://www.knittingyarns.com.au)).

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