

Apr 09, 2016 00:01 BST

Nation of shed lovers keeps nearly £15bn of goods in the garden

Sheds with running water, electricity and wifi, yet 3% still have a toilet in the garden 12% of sheds have no security whatsoever

In 21st century Britain the humble garden shed has transformed from simply being a place to keep the lawnmower and some tools into a place to store a staggering £14.9bn of property.

A study of nearly 2,000 people carried out for [RAC Home Insurance](#) reveals there are an estimated 15.2m sheds across the UK with contents worth an average of £983, with nearly four in 10 (37%) even having electricity, allowing people to run washing machines and fridge-freezers as well as computers.

With increasingly sophisticated and valuable equipment being kept in sheds the RAC Home Insurance research found as many as 6% have been broken into with thieves making off with some £272m of goods – an average of £298 per shed-owning household.

The most commonly taken items include: garden tools (30%); DIY tools (12%); bicycles (10%); lawnmowers (7%) and garden furniture (3%).

While one in 10 (10%) sheds are protected by alarm systems and a similar amount (10%) by extensive security measures like CCTV the majority (68%) are secured by padlock alone, and worryingly some 12% have no security whatsoever.

And, even though gardening equipment is still top of the shed storage list, more than half of people say their shed is used for general storage. Among some of the less common uses for the garden shed were 16% using it as a workshop or studio, 4% for social and relaxation purposes, and 3% of men escaping their 'other half', equating to half a million men over the age of 30 (547,695).

This perhaps explains why the average man over the age of 35 spends an hour and a half a week in his shed compared to women of the same age who spend 43 minutes.

Gardens, too, are also a target for thieves with one in 10 (9%) having had something taken from their garden, equating to £547m or £248 per garden. Items stolen include: gas heaters; benches; pergolas; ornamental water features; statues/sculptures; large ornamental ceramic pots; and Koi carp.

What's kept in the typical UK garden shed:

- Garden tools – 85%
- Garden furniture – 53%
- DIY tools and paint – 51%
- Lawnmower – 50%
- Pressure washer – 30%
- Bikes – 29%
- Barbecue – 23%
- Children's play equipment – 12%
- Camping equipment – 11%
- White goods – fridge/freezer, washing machine – 10%
- Computer equipment – 2%

Shed and outbuilding facts:

- 3% still have a toilet in the garden
- 28% have a brick-constructed outbuilding
- 22% have a greenhouse
- 11% have a summerhouse
- 7% of sheds have heating; 4% have wifi; 4% have running water

- 18% have a 8x6ft shed; 14% have a 6x4ft – making them the most popular shed sizes
- 25% have more than one shed

RAC Insurance director Mark Godfrey said: “It’s clear that the humble garden shed has moved on from being a mere storage facility to an area of recreation dramatically different from a place to sip sherry in the 1970s.

“Although some people have taken steps to ensure their sheds are well secured it’s worrying that so much valuable property is only being secured by a simple padlock, and that as many as 12% of sheds are being left completely unsecured.

“As sheds have clearly taken on greater significance in people’s lives, being used for overflow storage and even somewhere to work or somewhere to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life, they really need to be properly protected and insured as they will no doubt increasingly become targets for thieves.”

Notes to Editors

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist’s champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC’s annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today’s motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request