



*Creation waits  
with eager  
longing: How  
will you respond?*

## Everything Has Its Time

by Mary Minette  
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*For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under heaven  
- Ecclesiastes 3: 1*

In my region, Fall is "a time to pluck up what is planted" and "a time to die" -- for tomato vines and frost-blackened basil plants, for leaves on trees. But while fall is an end to the year's growth, it is also a time to look forward to the quiet of winter, the rebirth of spring and the richness of summer. God created a world where everything has its time, from dead leaves to spring crocuses. In God's world things are meant to work together as a whole: death leads to birth; fall leads to winter and then to spring; decaying leaves and plants feed the soil that in turn feeds us.

And that brings us to ... compost.

Did you know that each person in the United States generates 216.3 pounds of yard waste each year? That's millions of tons of grass clippings, leaves, branches, blackened basil plants and spent tomato vines. **But here's a success story for you:** slightly more than 64 percent of that waste is recycled by being made into compost for use in yards and parks. The percentage of yard waste sent to landfills in the U.S. has been steadily declining for the past four decades!

And did you know that 12.5 percent of the estimated 413 million tons of municipal solid waste generated in the United States is food? According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), each year Americans throw away more than 25 percent of the food we prepare, about 96 billion pounds of food waste in our homes, schools, restaurants and other food preparation sites. We spend about 1 billion dollars a year to dispose of food waste, and most of it ends up in waste incinerators or in landfills; currently less than 3 percent of food waste is donated or recycled as compost.

Some large institutions are working to compost food waste: for example, in 2007, Pacific Lutheran University began composting food waste in its dining services and has expanded food waste composting to offices and residence halls, helping to earn the school an A- on the [2010 College Sustainability Report Card](#). And some municipalities are beginning to recycle food waste. [San Francisco](#) and [Seattle](#) both

require curbside recycling of food waste; [a growing number of cities](#), mostly on the West Coast, have food waste recycling programs.

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### ***Time to Act***

Learn how to compost your household's food and yard waste. Visit this helpful [resource](#) and the [wikiHow on compost](#) for guides on how to get started.

Waste less food. For tips, check out "[Wasted Food](#)" and "[LoveFoodHateWaste](#)."

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### ***Time to pray -- A Prayer for the Journey***

*Gracious and loving God, you gave us the bounty of your earth to nurture our souls and to feed us and our fellow creatures. Grant us the wisdom to live in its cycles, to use only what we need and to leave alone or return what we do not use to nurture and feed your earth.*

*Amen.*

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