Step 6: Outdoor Water Use

- Complete the "Irrigation Checklist" on the following page to ensure that your system is functioning optimally.
- Water your landscape only when needed. By knowing how much water your plants need, you can apply the right amount of water and no more, have healthier plants, and save money.

- A "Weekly Watering Schedule" based on current weather conditions is posted on **marinwater.org** every Friday during irrigation season. To sign up to receive the schedule via email—along with helpful water-smart garden tips—send a request to **conservation@marinwater.org** or write your email address on the survey form you return to MMWD.
- There are many water conservation opportunities for the swimming pool owner. Simply by using a pool cover, you can cut down on the amount of water lost to evaporation by 90 to 95 percent. Plus, you will save on energy costs for heating the water and running pool equipment. Keeping your swimming pool and pool equipment well maintained also will help prevent water waste problems. For more information on swimming pool evaporation, finding pool leaks, maintenance, and more, visit **www.h2ouse.org**.

Irrigation Checklist

- ❒ Do your sprinklers overspray onto the sidewalks, patio, driveway, or street? Adjust spray pattern, relocate sprinkler heads, or change spray nozzles.
- ❒ Are your sprinkler heads misting? This indicates a high water pressure problem. Adjust or install a new pressure regulator. Set pressure per the recommendation of the sprinkler manufacturer, usually between 40 and 50 pounds per square inch (psi).
- ❒ Are spray patterns blocked? Trim back vegetation or raise the sprinkler heads as needed; this will increase the uniformity of application.
- ❒ Do you have broken sprinkler heads? Replace as soon as possible or install a temporary cap. Replace sprinkler and nozzle with one that matches those on the existing circuit.
- ❒ Do you have mismatched sprinkler nozzles or heads? Precipitation rates and performance vary greatly between manufacturers. Replacements must match sprinkler heads on the same circuit. Mixing types or brands wastes water.
- ❒ Are separate irrigation circuits provided for drip, spray, rotor heads, and micro-misters? Provide separate circuits for different irrigation types; this will save water and make for healthier plants.
- ❒ Does the sprinkler spray pattern (for lawns) reach the adjacent head? Adjust spray pattern, replace nozzle, or relocate sprinkler head.
- ❒ Do you find moss or mushrooms growing around your plants? Your plants are being overwatered. Reduce your watering time a few minutes each week until your plants start to show signs of stress. Then increase your watering time slightly until the stress is eliminated.
- ❒ Are your high- and low-water-use plants mixed together on the same irrigation circuits? Group plants with similar water needs on the same circuit.
- ❒ Do you have mulch around your shrubs, trees, and flowers? Providing a 2-inch layer of mulch will substantially reduce water use and weeds. Mulch also increases water infiltration into the soil.
- ❒ Do you have excessive thatch buildup in your lawn? This condition inhibits water infiltration into the soil and is usually caused by overwatering or over-fertilization.
- ❒ Is your soil saturated after only watering for a few minutes? Does water run off your slopes? You probably have a clay soil, and water is absorbed very slowly. Shorten your watering times and use multiple start times to allow the water to soak in to avoid runoff.
- ❒ Are the stations at your irrigation controller labeled? Label each station appropriately. For example: drip for groundcover, spray for lawn, micromisters for flowers. A site map is a helpful tool in determining watering schedules for each station.
- ❒ Do you have basins around your newly planted trees and shrubs? Basins help direct water to the root ball, if drip irrigation is not used.