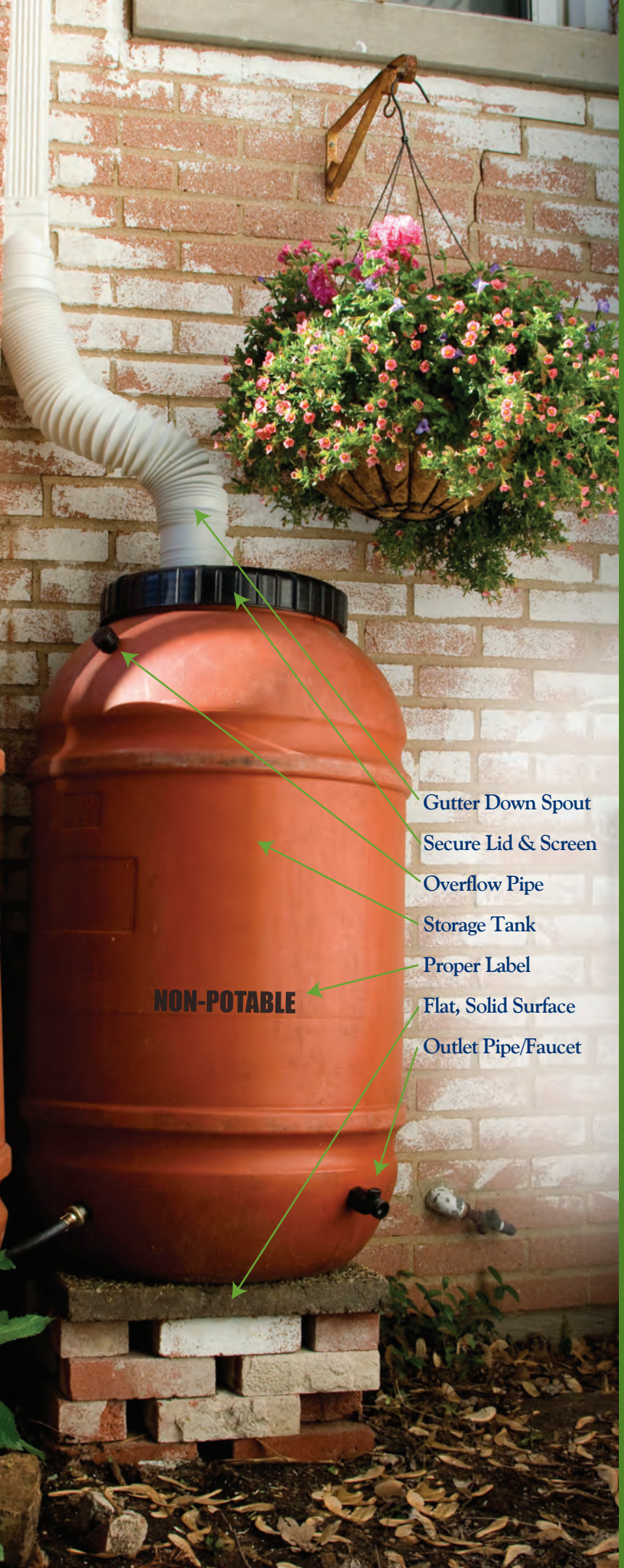

Rainwater Harvesting with **Rain Barrels**

Many Sweetwater Authority customers are now collecting rainwater to irrigate their gardens or landscaping. Although rainwater can be captured from many types of surfaces, this guide focuses on harvesting rainwater from rooftops by installing rain barrels. Rainwater harvesting can help reduce residents' water bills and the community's reliance on imported water from outside the region.

A simple rainwater harvesting system usually consists of:

- A rain barrel that is placed on a flat solid surface and connected to gutter downspouts.
- A hose to distribute water from the barrel via gravity to the landscaping or garden area.
- An overflow pipe on the rain barrel is directed away from the house to a safe area in case the barrel reaches its capacity.
- A screen to prevent debris and mosquito breeding.
- Secured lid and brackets to prevent someone from drowning or the barrel from tipping over.
- A label on the barrel designating the water as "non-potable."

WHO CAN INSTALL A RAIN BARREL?

Although there is no formal permit required for a rain barrel, it is highly advised to work through a trained landscape professional or rain gutter contractor to ensure the proper sizing, placement, and use of a simple rainwater harvesting system.

Learn More:

1. Sign-up for a free workshop to learn about sustainable landscaping practices. For more information, visit **www.thegarden.org/events**
2. Visit the Living Coast Discovery Center to see a rain barrel on display. Visit **www.thelivingcoast.org** for garden details.
3. Make your own rain barrel out of a 55-gallon plastic drum! Find out how at **www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/pdf/make-rainbarrel.pdf**

DID YOU KNOW?
The San Diego Sustainable Living Institute offers courses and workshops on water conservation and green living.

For more details, visit **www.sdsustainable.org**