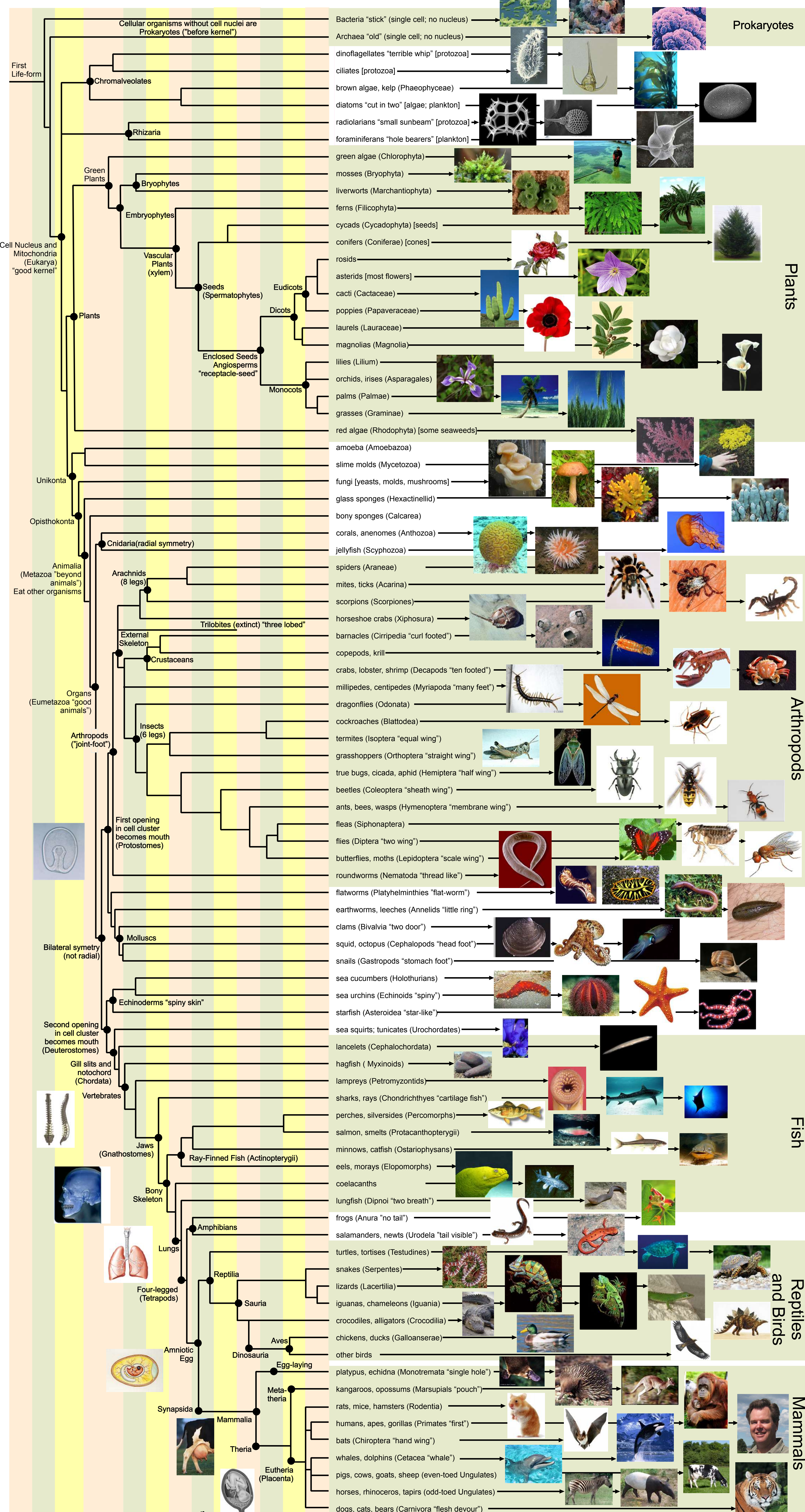


Tree of Life



Timeline (MYA): 4.6 BYA, 3.8 BYA, 2.5 BYA, 542 MYA, 488 MYA, 443 MYA, 416 MYA, 359 MYA, 299 MYA, 251 MYA, 199 MYA, 145 MYA, 65 MYA

Geological Eras: Hadean, Archean, Proterozoic, Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous, Cenozoic

This diagram is a *cladogram*, a tree-like picture showing how organisms are related. Each sub-tree in a cladogram is called a *clade*, such as mammals, animals, amphibians. Most branches in a cladogram should split into two sub-trees, but for simplicity this picture has some branches that split into three. Extinct species are represented as dead-end branches. This cladogram is a high-level overview and does not show individual species. Each clade is defined by a distinguishing characteristic that sets it apart from neighboring clades. For example, tetrapods have 4 legs. Sometimes that characteristic disappears in later organisms, for example: snakes are in the tetrapod clade, but no longer have legs. Some well-known groups of organisms are not clades - including reptiles, protists, fish, invertebrates, sponges, and prokaryotes - because they do not include *all* descendants of the most recent common ancestor.

V3.6
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