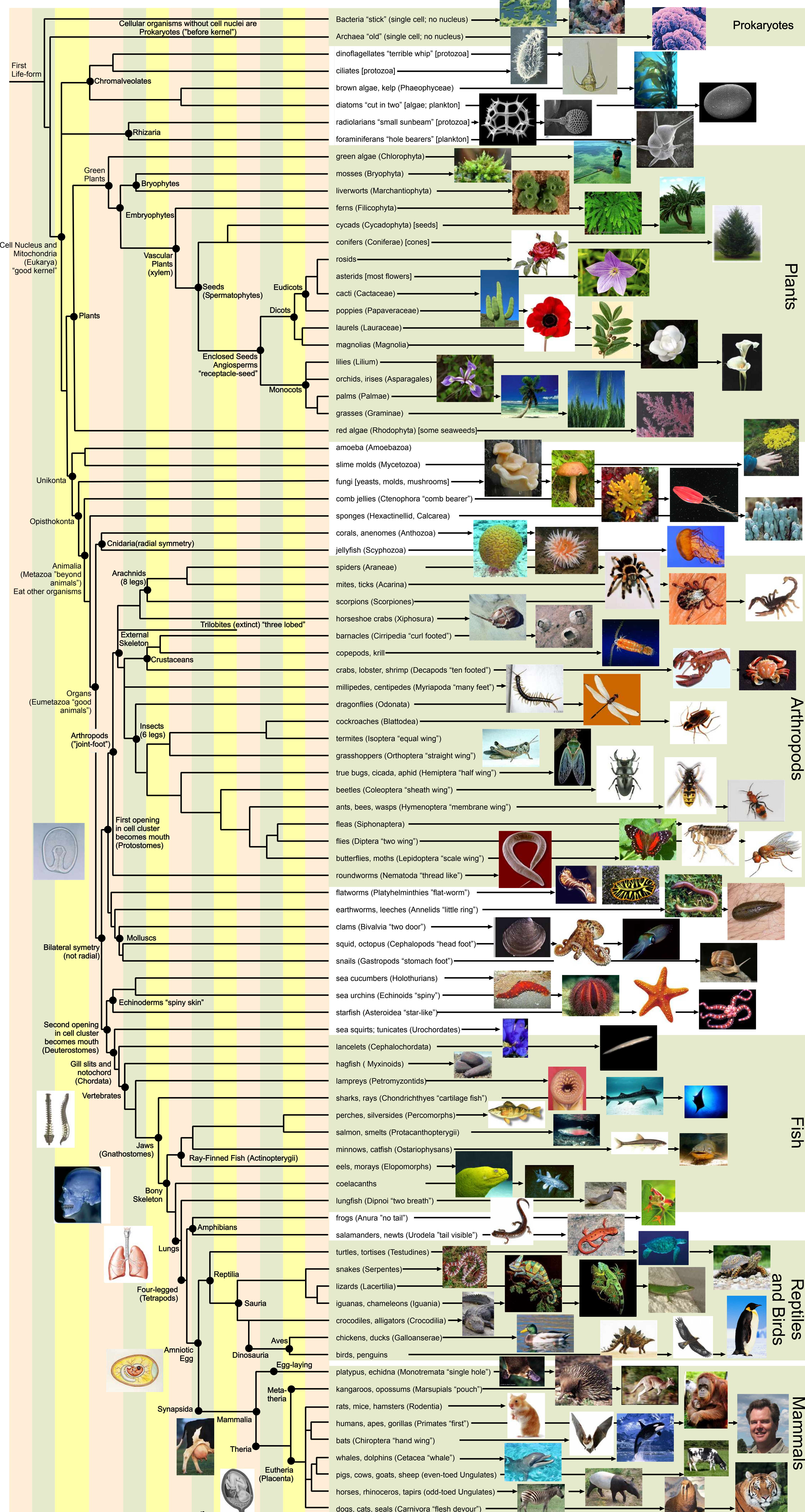


Tree of Life



Hadean
 Archean
 Proterozoic
 Cambrian
 Ordovician
 Silurian
 Devonian
 Carboniferous
 Permian
 Triassic
 Jurassic
 Cretaceous
 Cenozoic

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

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.

V3.8
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