

# Contemporary Methods in Assembling and Using the Tree of Life

Pamela S. Soltis

Florida Museum of Natural History  
University of Florida



# The Circle of Life



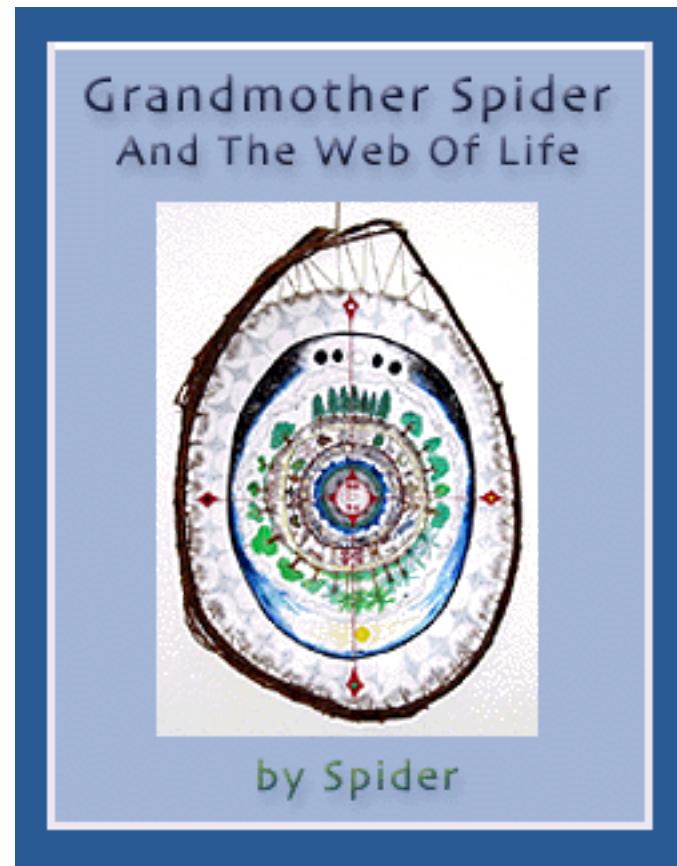
Disney

# Life is connected...

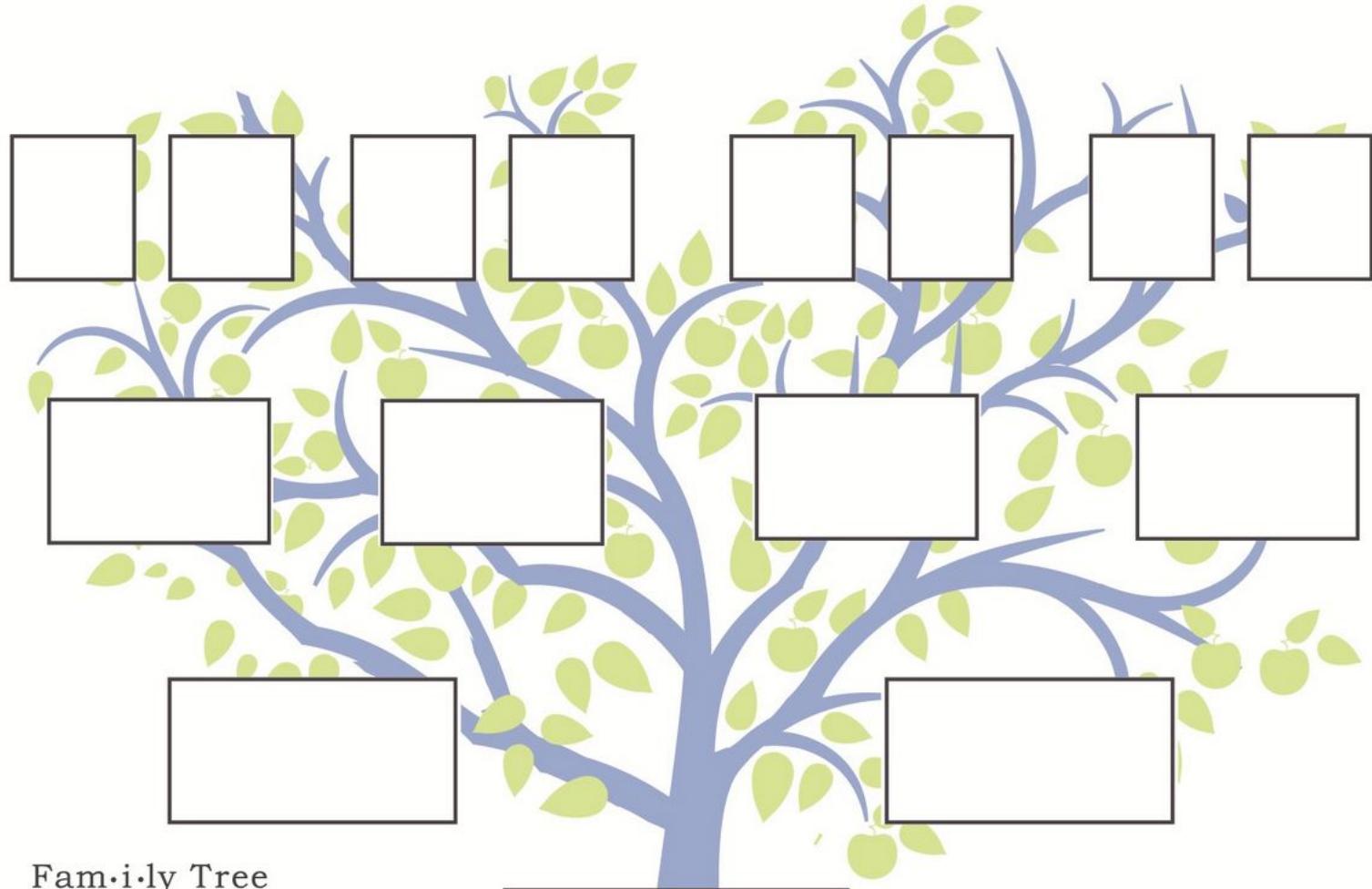


*genealogically*

*ecologically*



# Family Tree



## Fam.i.ly Tree

Noun

1. A diagram showing the relationships between people in several generations of a family.
2. All of the descendants and ancestors in a family.

Synonyms

pedigree - lineage - genealogy - heritage - stemma



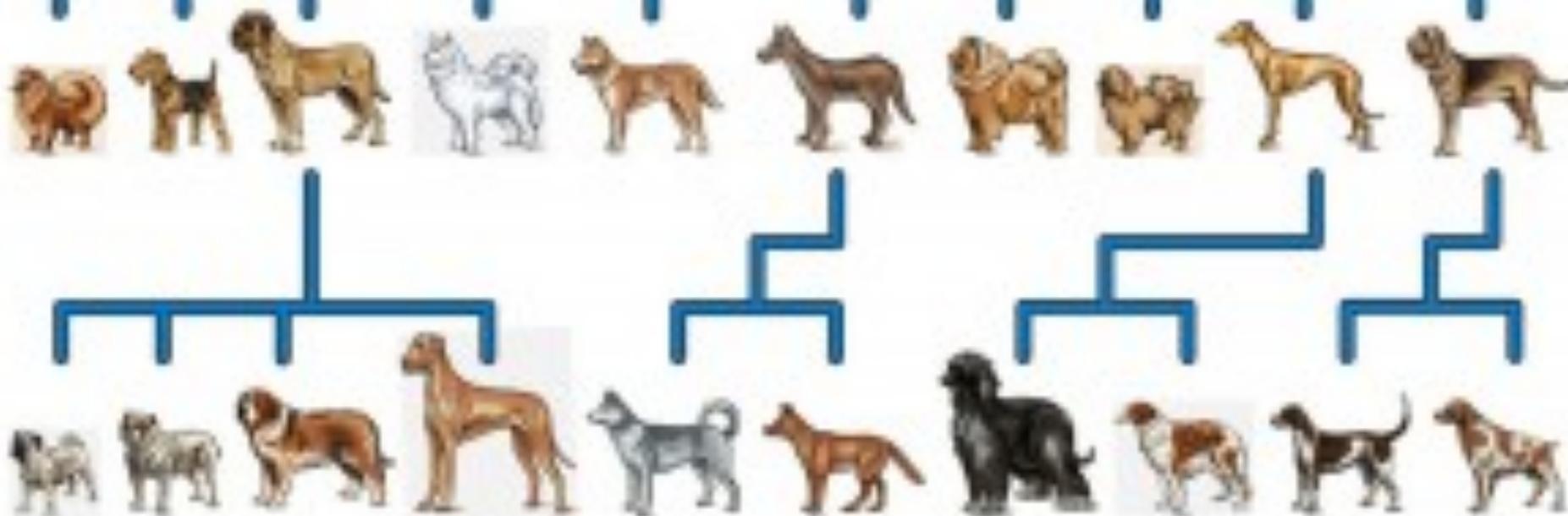
Gray wolf  
(Common ancestor)

Europe

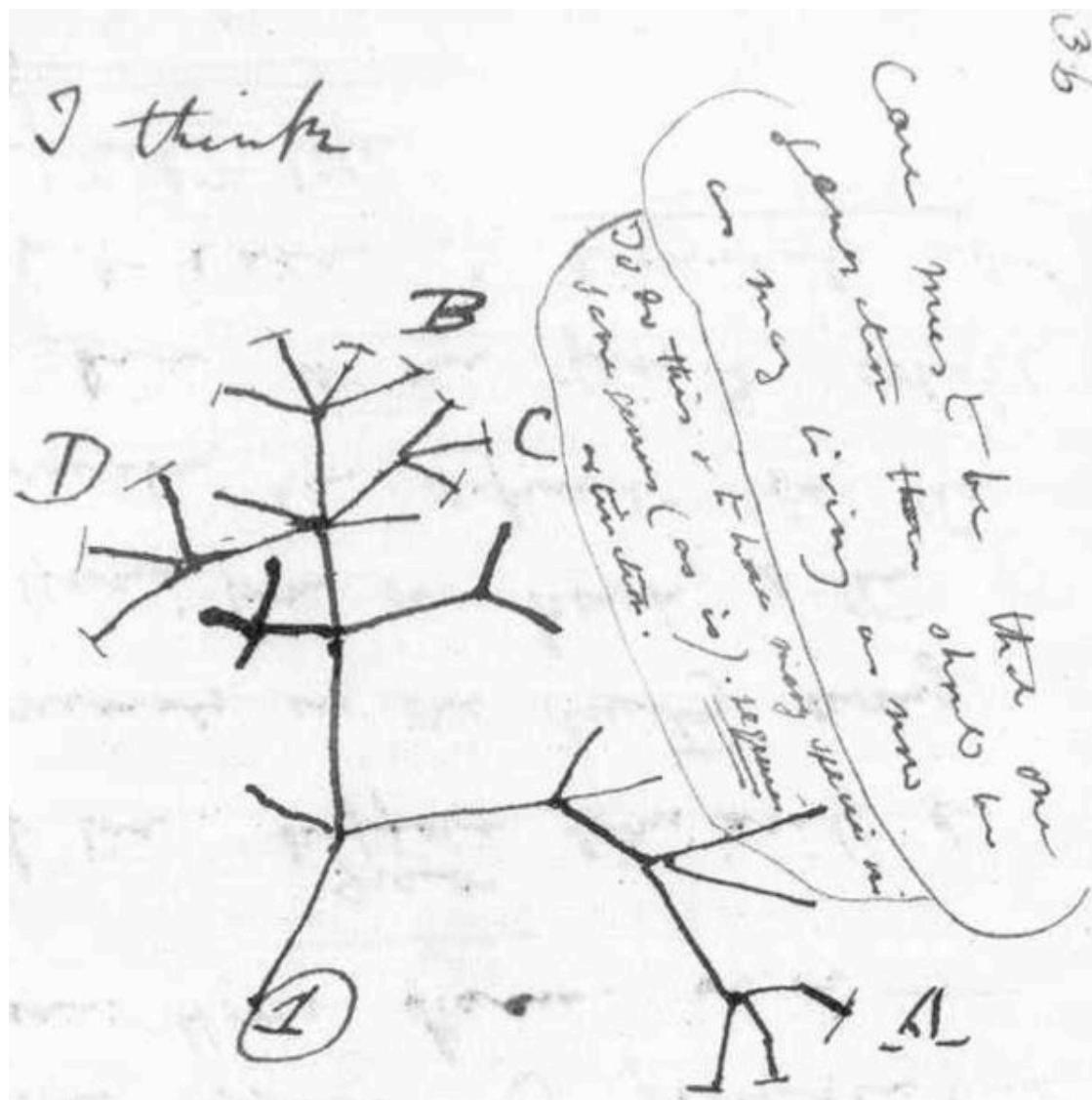
North America

China

India

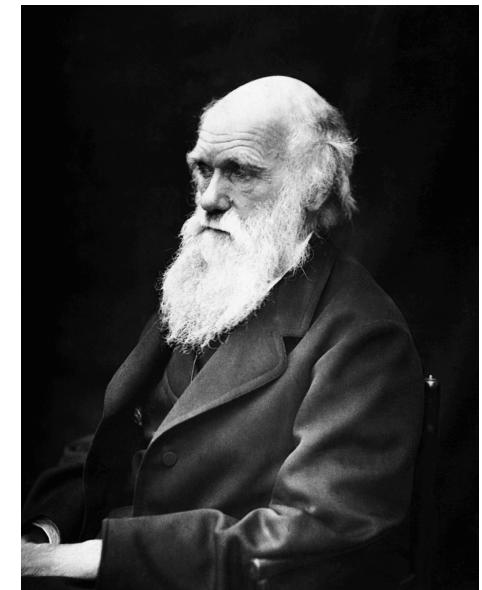
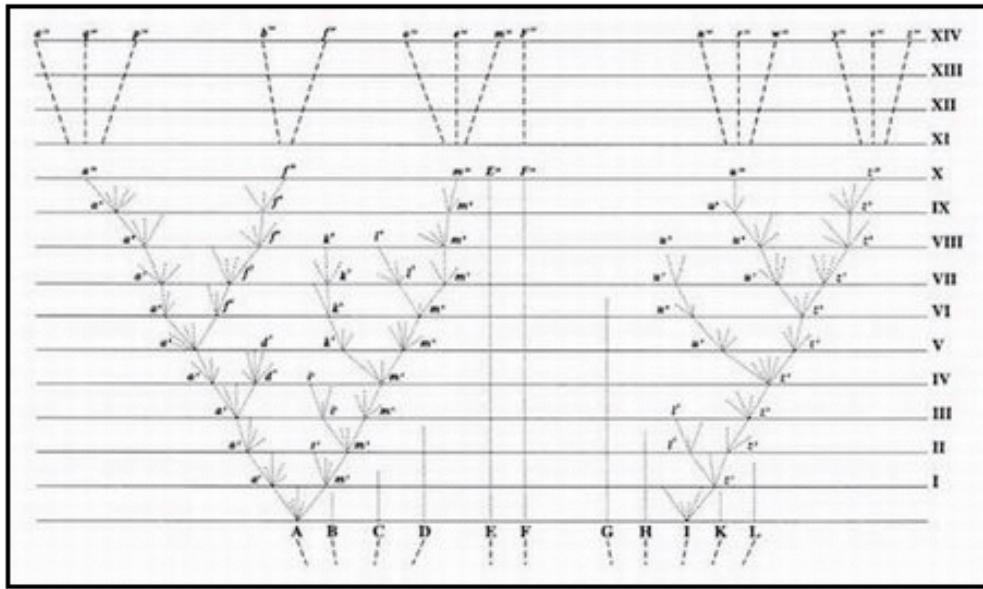


# The Tree of Life



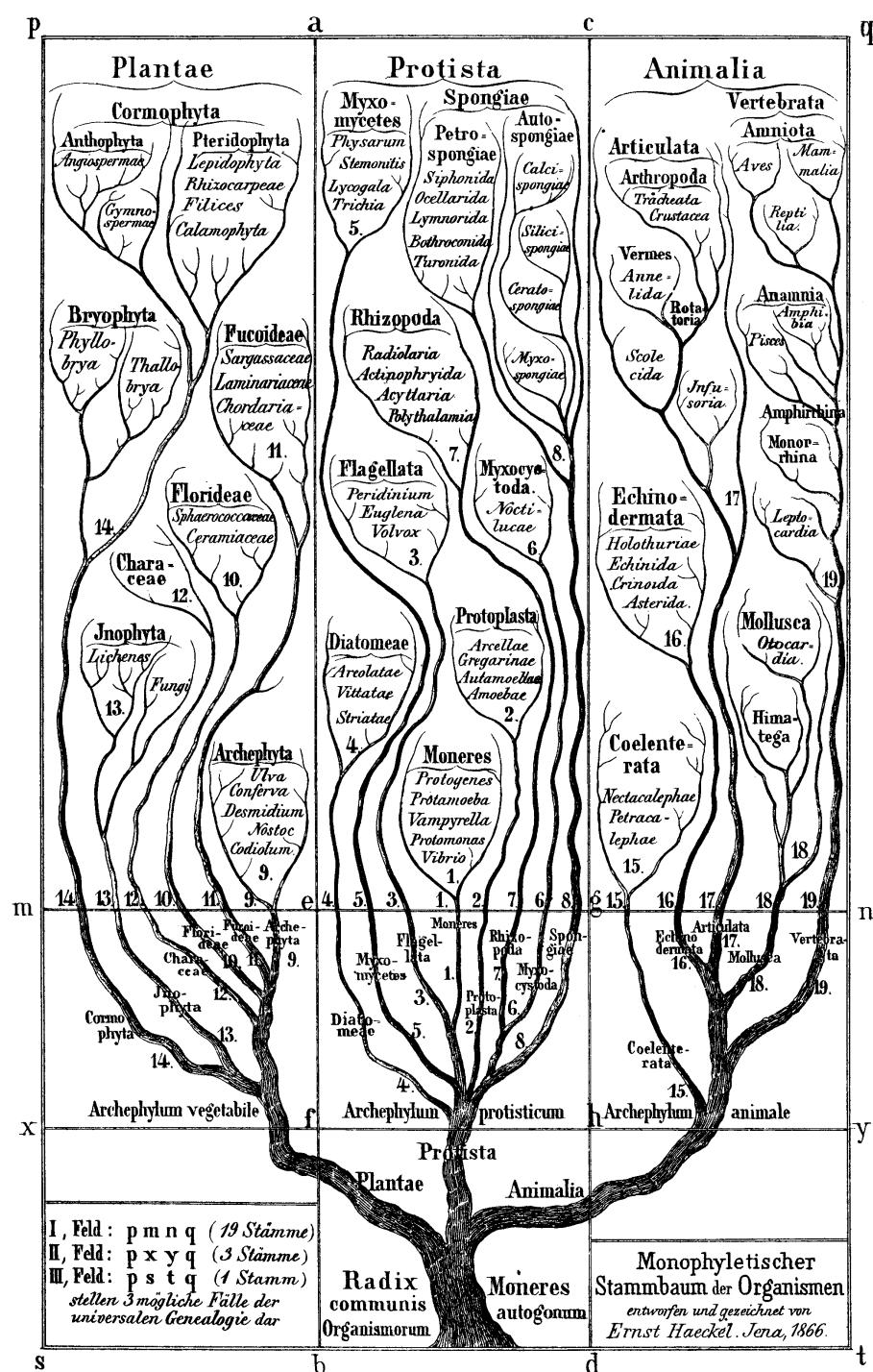
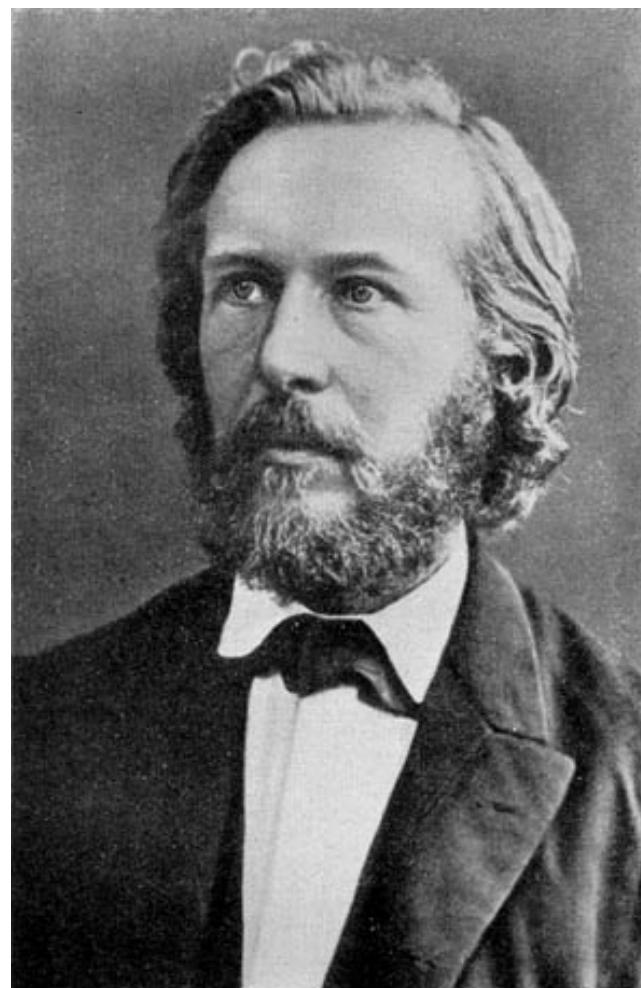
Darwin's  
notebook  
1837

# Darwin's Great Tree of Life



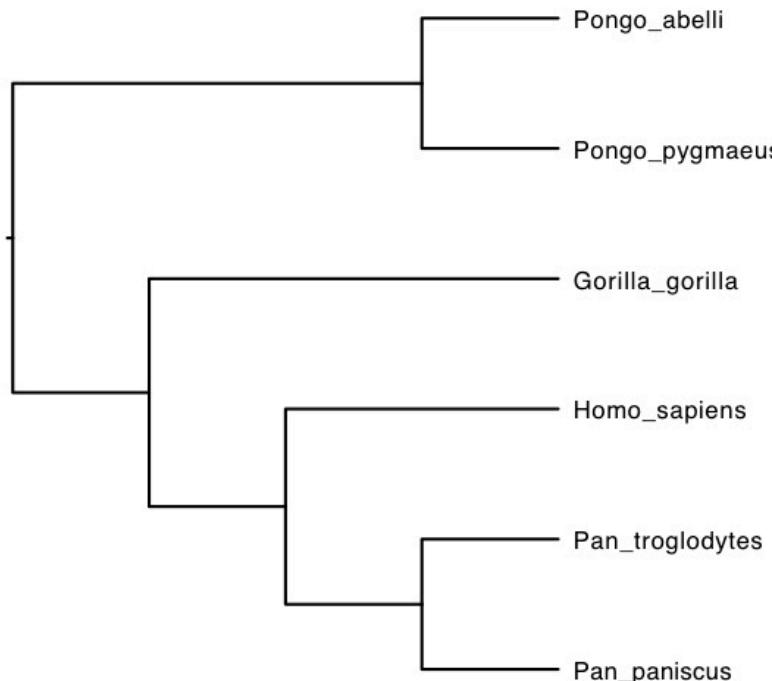
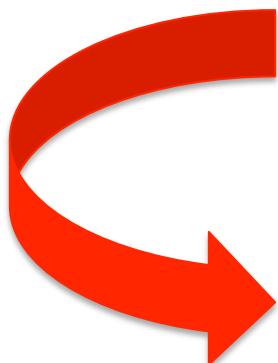
*"As buds give rise by growth to fresh buds, and these, if vigorous, branch out and overtop on all sides many a feebler branch, so by generation I believe it has been with the great Tree of Life, which fills with its dead and broken branches the crust of the earth, and covers the surface with its ever-branching and beautiful ramifications."*

# Ernst Haeckel's Tree of Life 1866



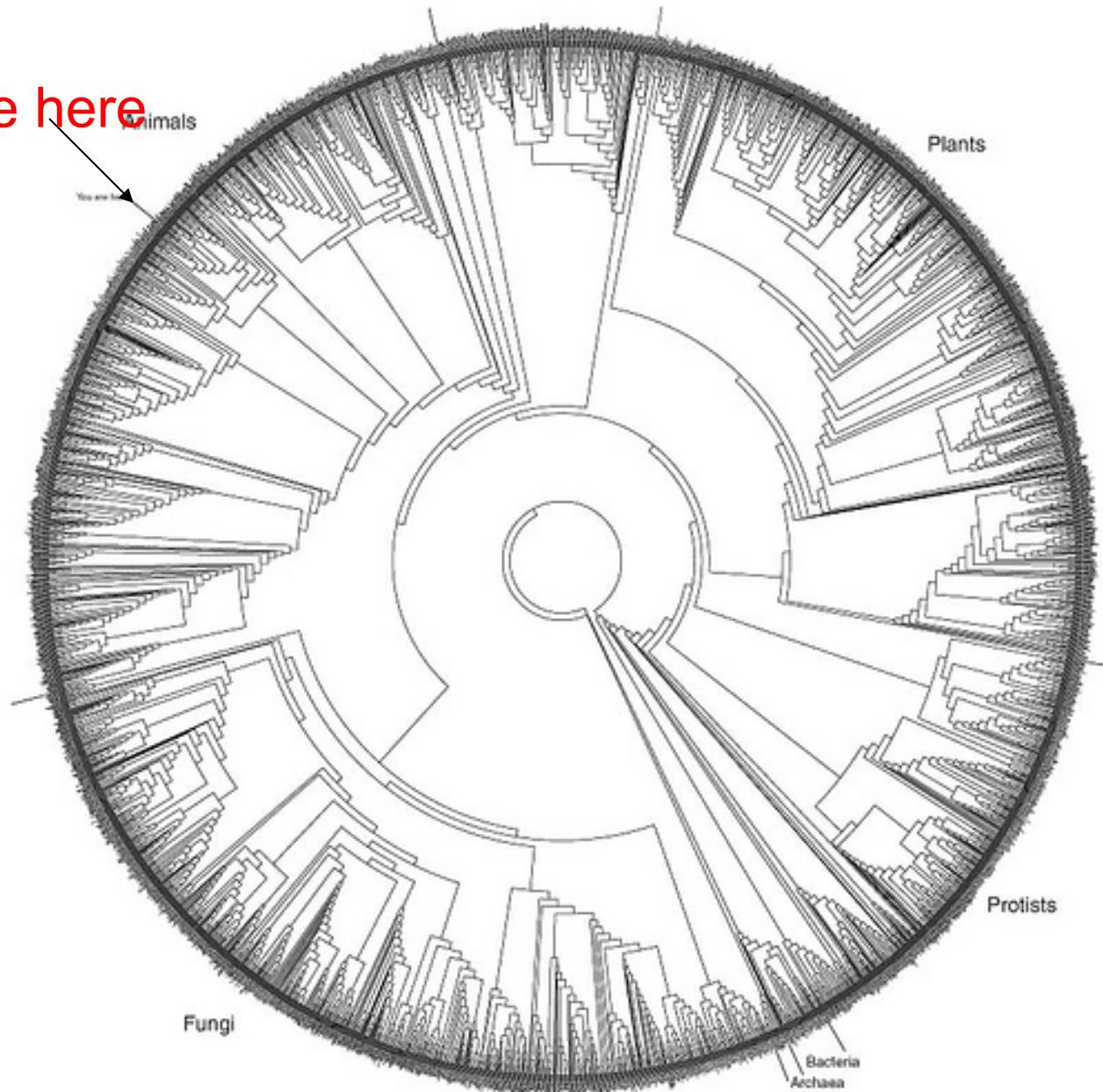
# Using DNA Sequences to Build Trees

Characters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Pongo abelli	A	T	G	A	C	C	T	C	A	A	C	A	C	G	T	A	A	A	T	C
Pongo pygmaeus	A	T	G	A	C	C	C	C	A	A	T	A	C	G	C	A	A	A	A	C
Gorilla gorilla	A	T	G	A	C	C	C	C	T	A	T	A	C	G	C	A	A	A	A	C
Homo sapiens	A	T	G	A	C	C	C	C	A	A	T	A	C	G	C	A	A	A	A	T
Pan troglodytes	A	T	G	A	C	C	C	C	A	A	C	A	C	G	C	A	A	A	A	T
Pan paniscus	A	T	G	A	C	C	C	C	A	A	C	A	C	G	C	A	A	A	A	T



# We are Just One Twig on the Tree of Life

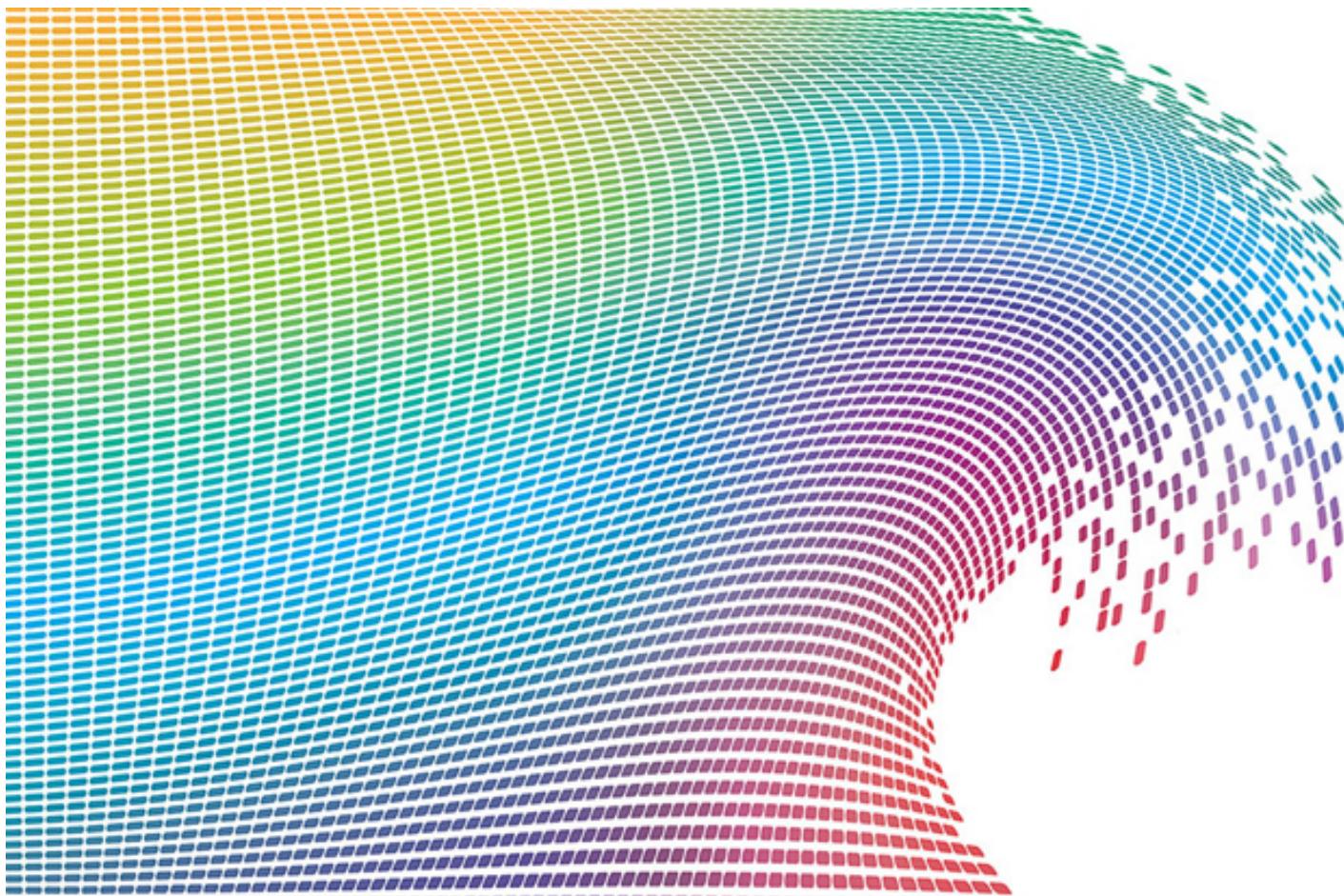
You are here



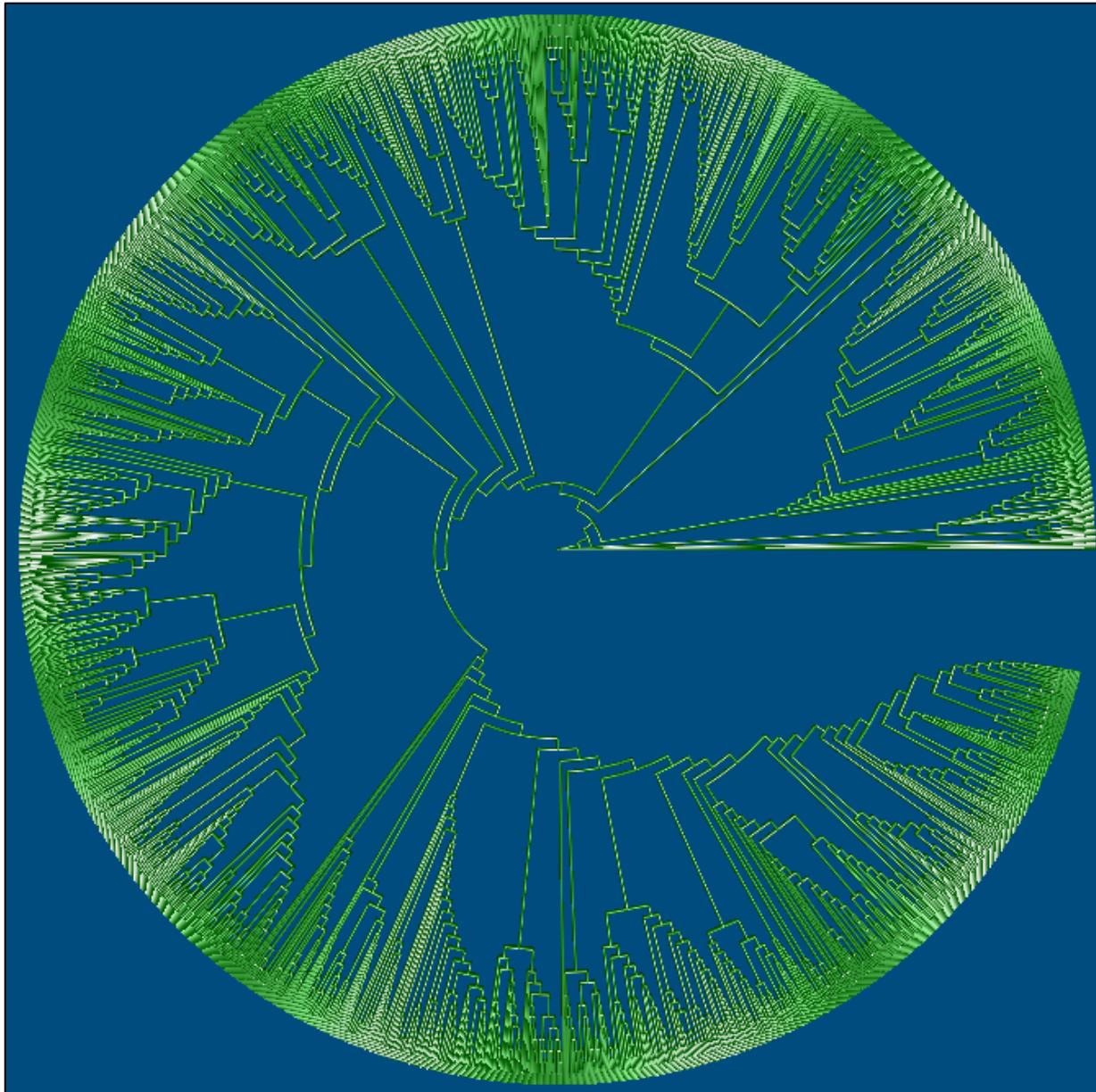
D. Hillis



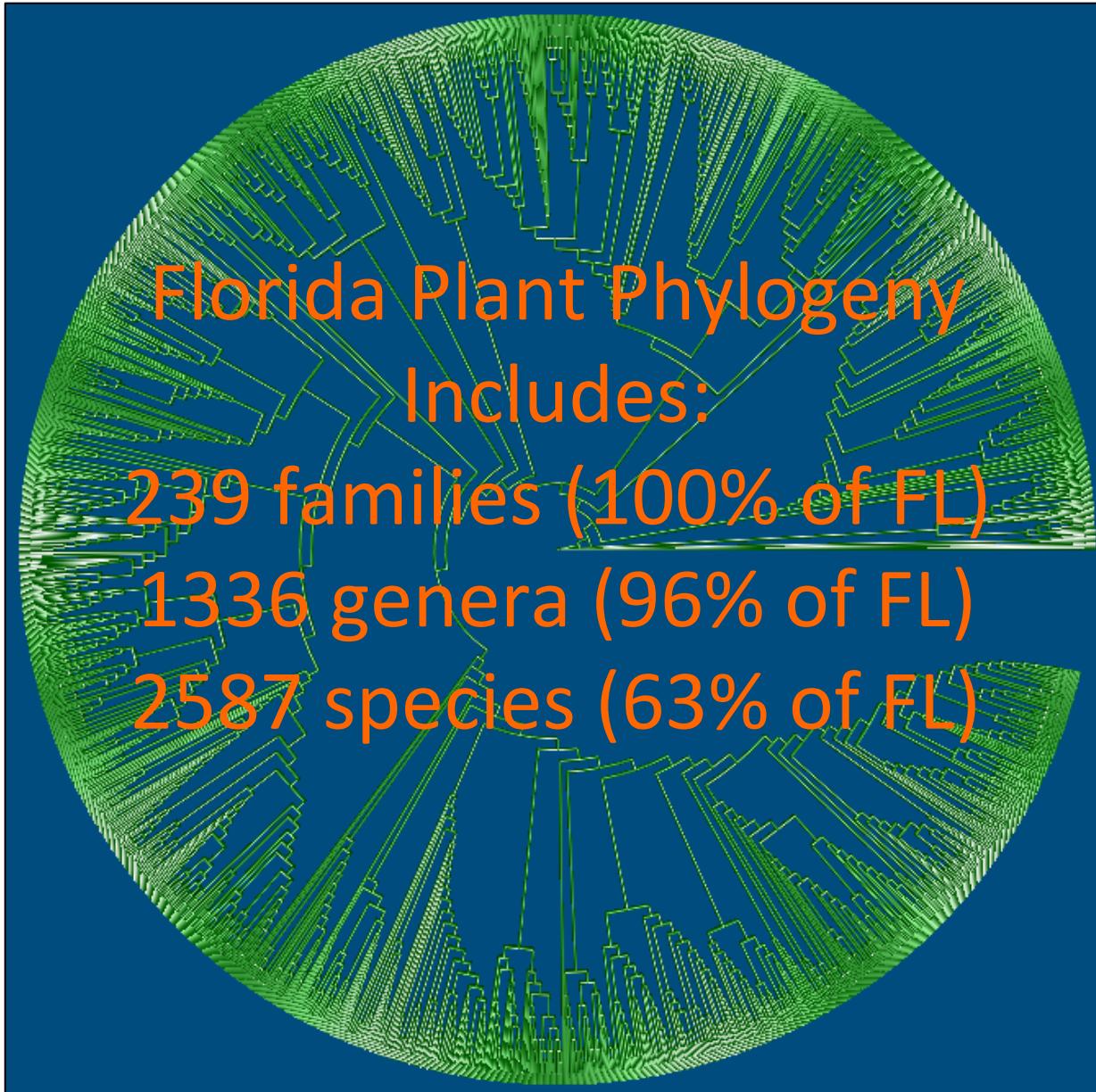
# Genomics & Transcriptomics harnessing the ‘DNA Data Deluge’



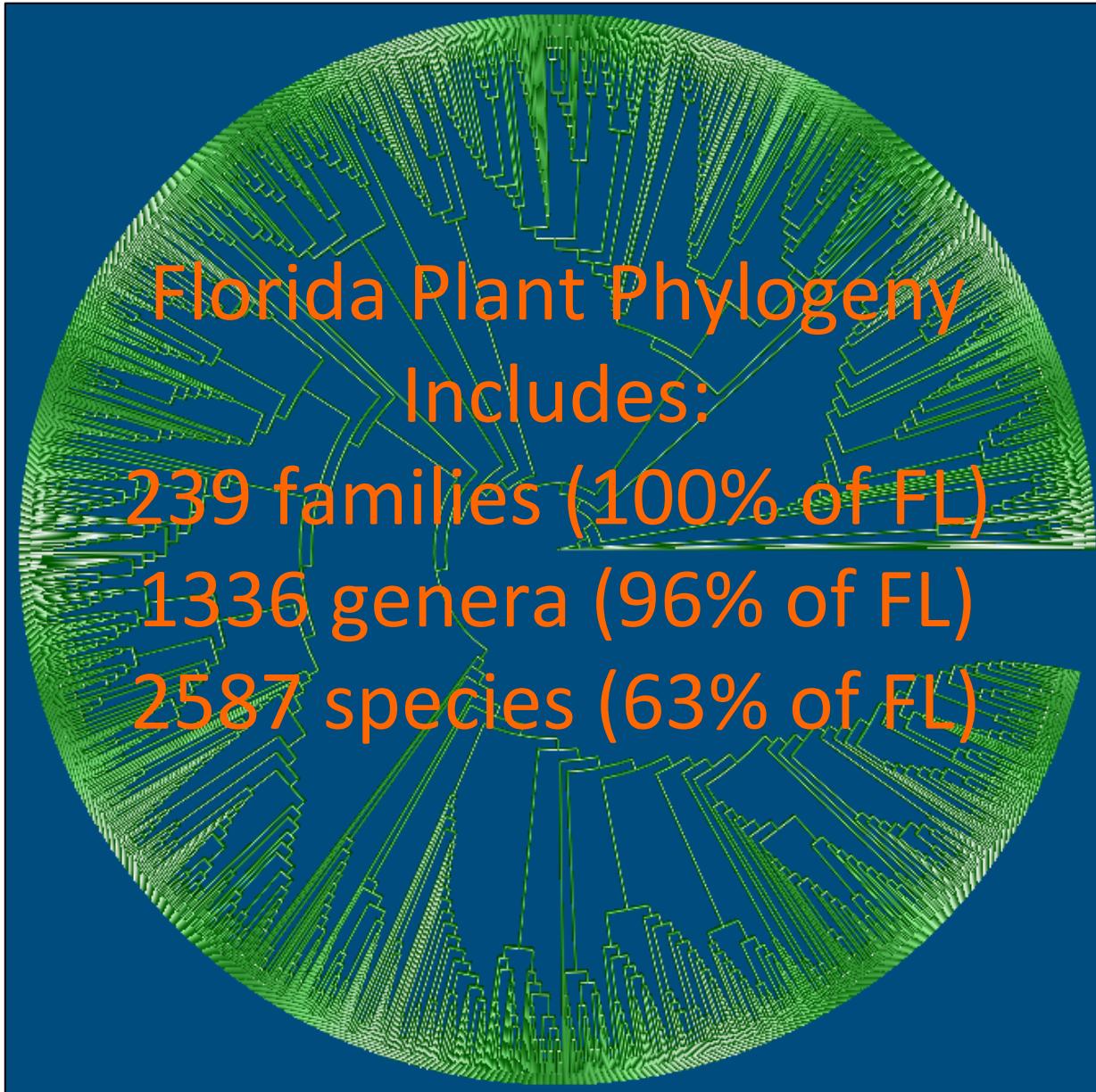
# Many Species

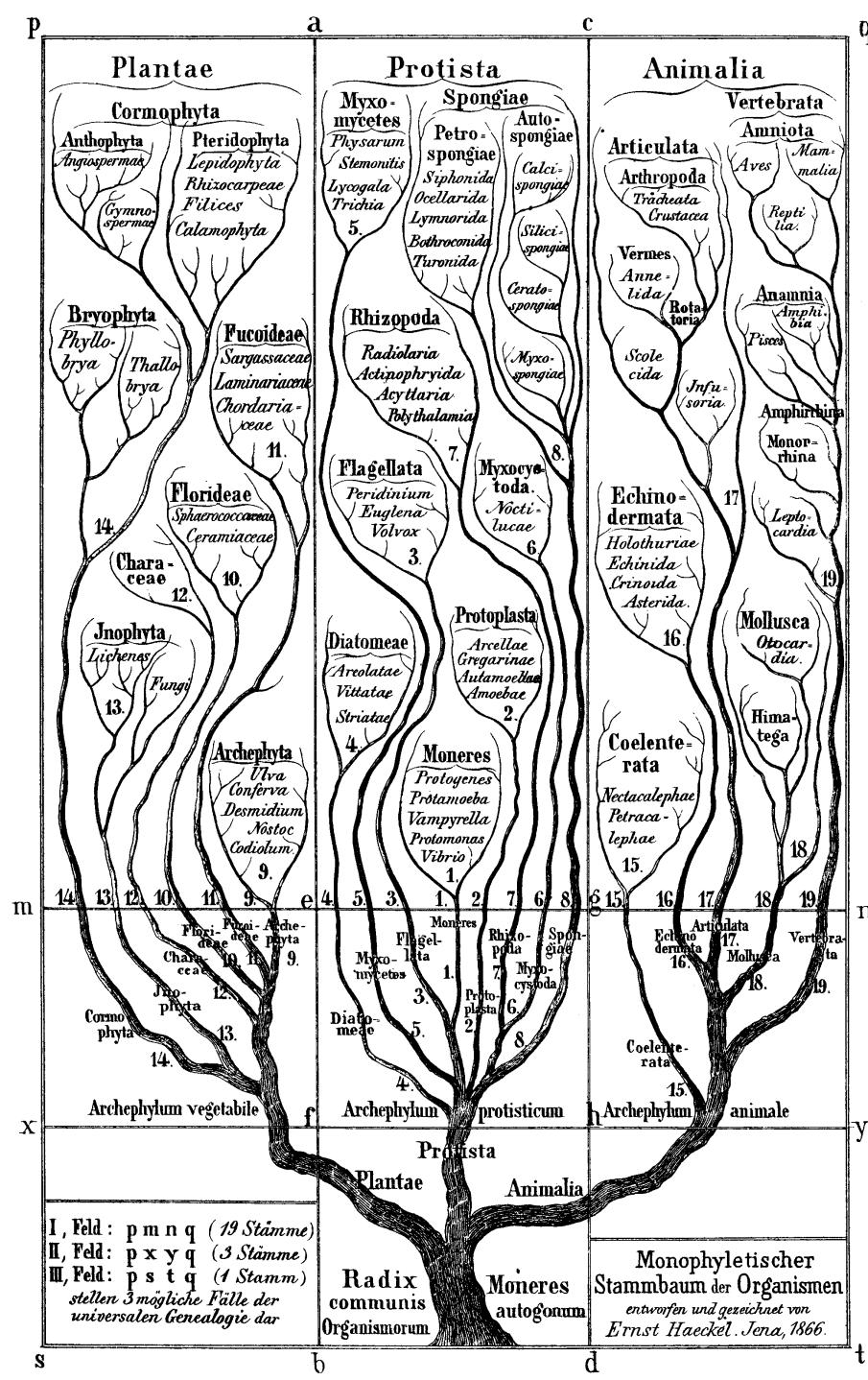


# Many Species



# Many Species: >55,000 plants!



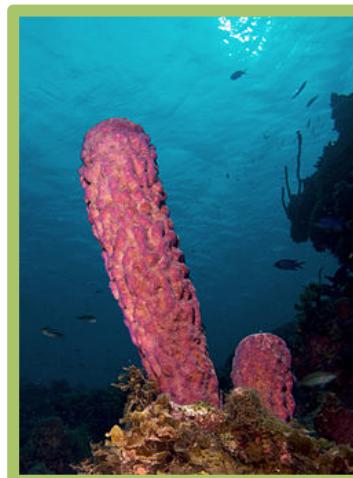
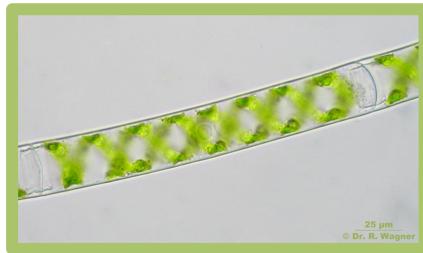


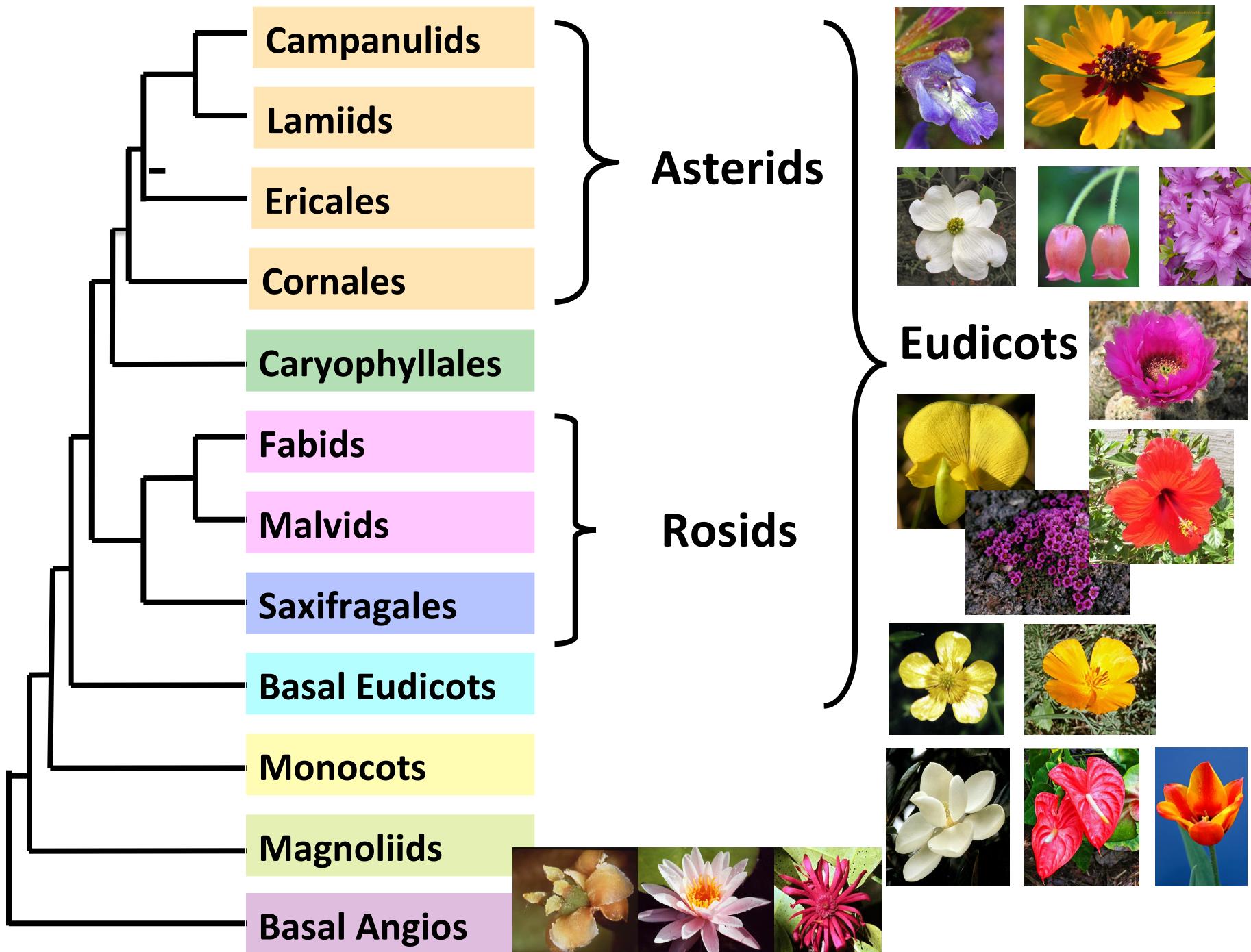
# Do we know the Tree of Life?



VANILLA PLANIFOLIA

© 1998 Greg Allikas

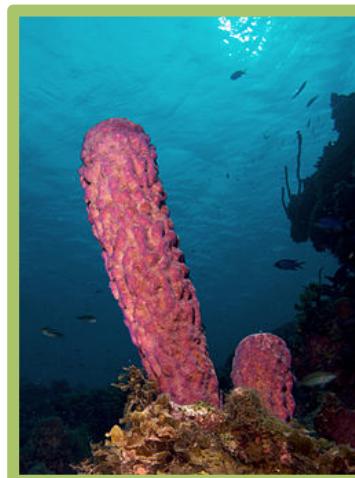






VANILLA PLANIFOLIA

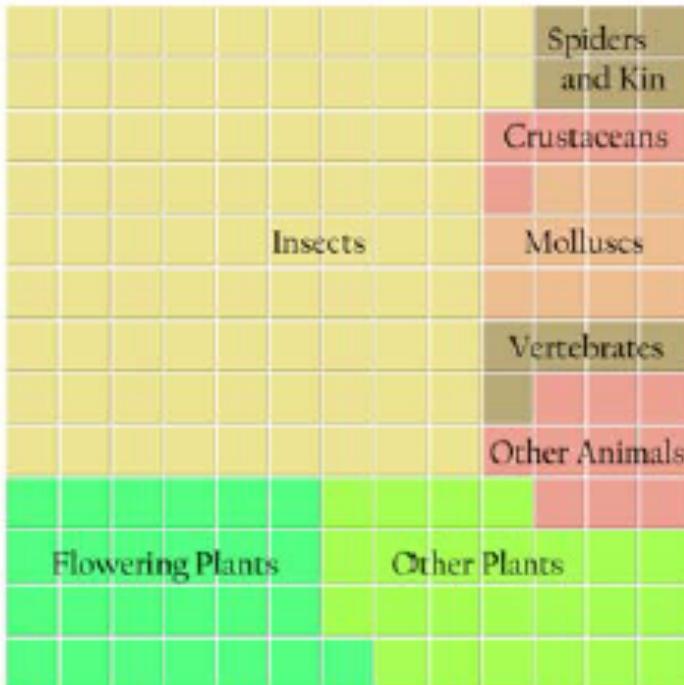
© 1998 Greg Allikas



# So Many Species...

## Known Biodiversity (excluding microbes)

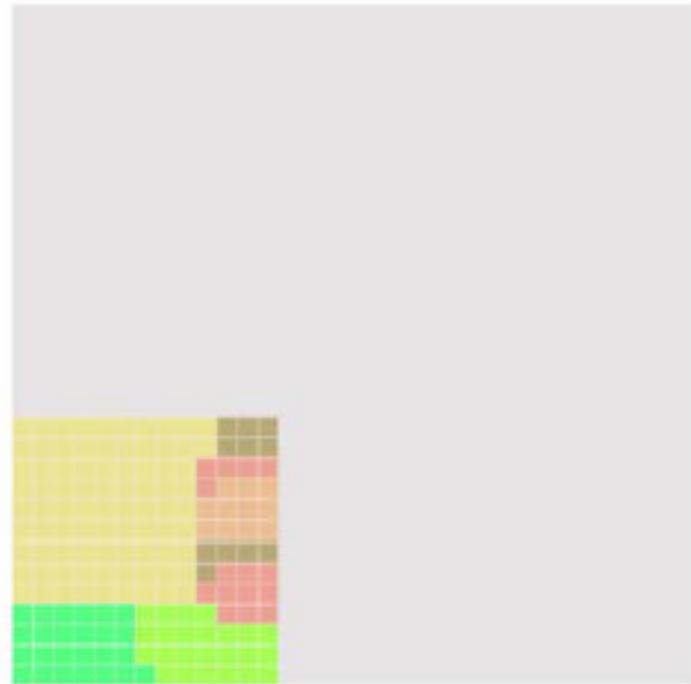
Approximately 1.7 million named species of plants and animals.



1 square - 10,000 species

## Estimated Biodiversity (excluding microbes)

10 million species

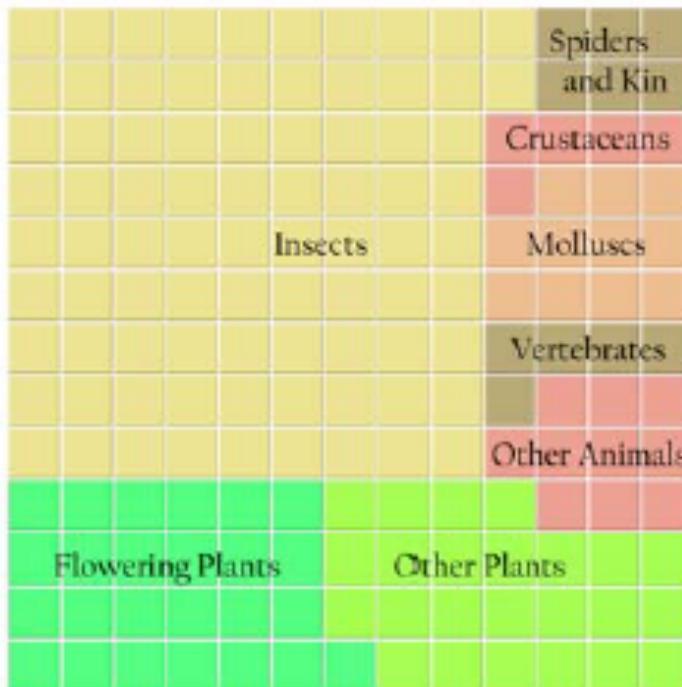


~1.7 million described, 10 million total? 100 million?

Known Biodiversity

(excluding microbes)

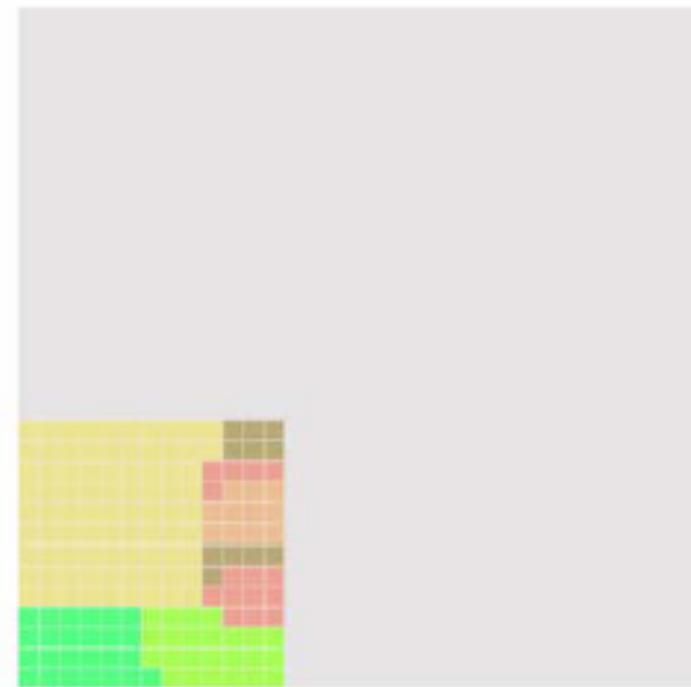
Approximately 1.7 million named  
species of plants and animals.



Estimated Biodiversity

(excluding microbes)

10 million species



# The Number of Possible Trees...

- Number of possible trees increases exponentially with the number of taxa
  - 3 taxa - 1 unrooted tree (or 4 rooted trees)
  - 4 taxa - 3 unrooted trees (or 15 rooted trees)
  - 10 taxa - 2 million unrooted (282 million rooted)
  - 20 taxa -  $2.2 \times 10^{20}$  unrooted
  - 22 taxa -  $3 \times 10^{23}$  unrooted (*~ a mole of trees*)
  - 228 taxa -  $1.2 \times 10^{502}$  (*more than the number of atoms in the universe...; Hillis, 1996*)

# A Universe of Possible Trees

A detailed image of a spiral galaxy, likely the Andromeda Galaxy, showing its characteristic spiral arms and central bulge against a dark, star-filled background.



# OPEN Tree of Life

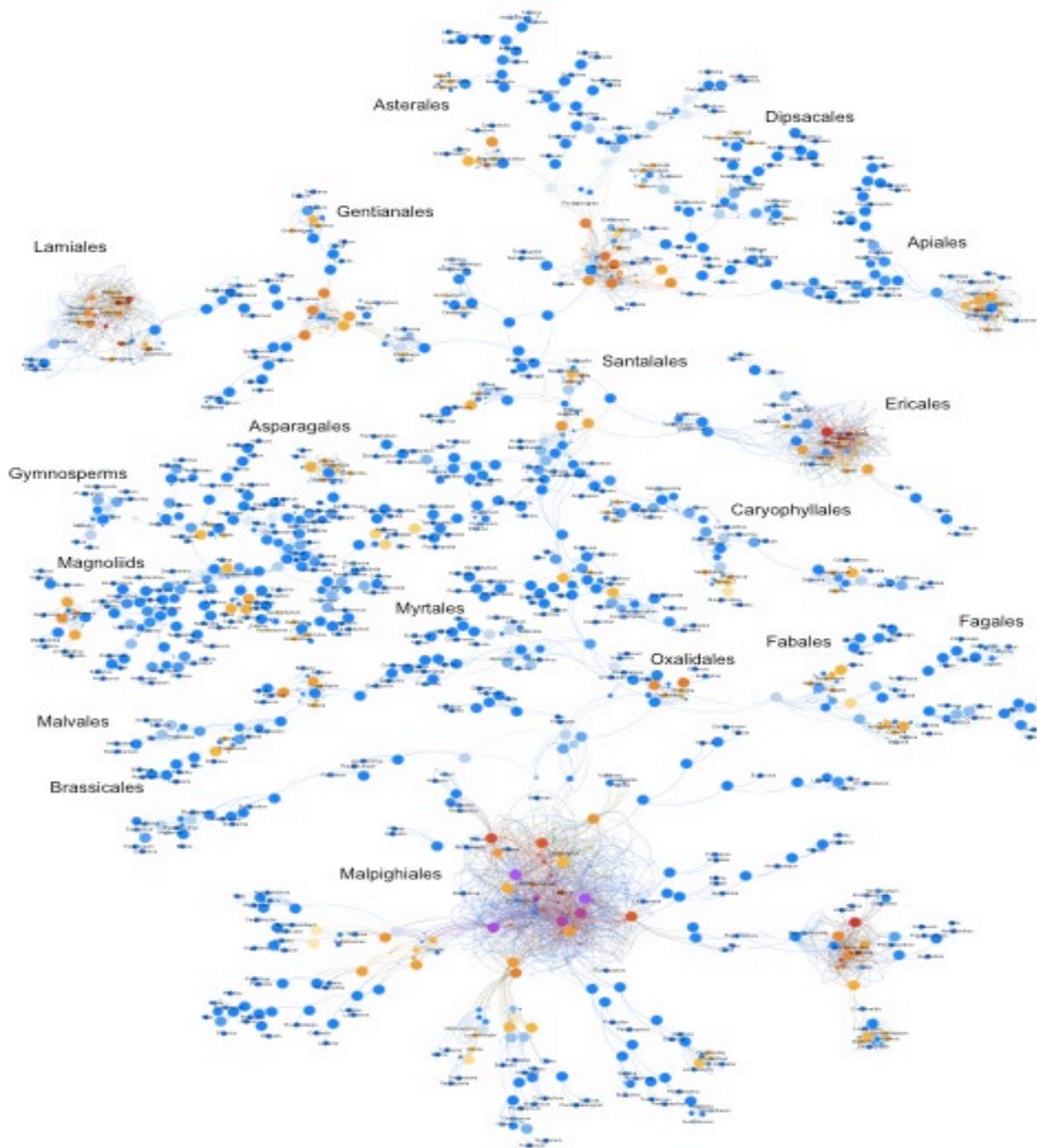
---

This initial **tree of life will not be static**; instead, **we will develop tools for scientists** to update and revise the tree as **new data** come in.

[www.opentreeoflife.org](http://www.opentreeoflife.org)



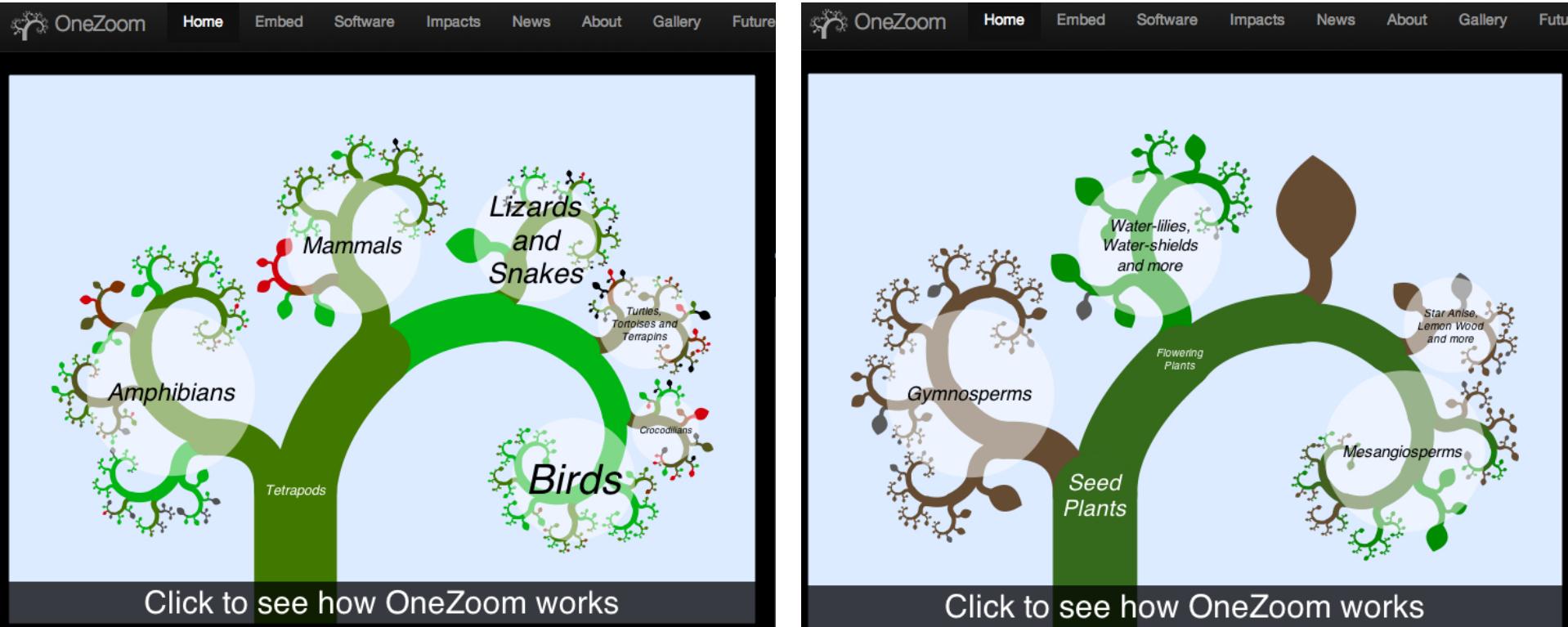
# Graph Theory

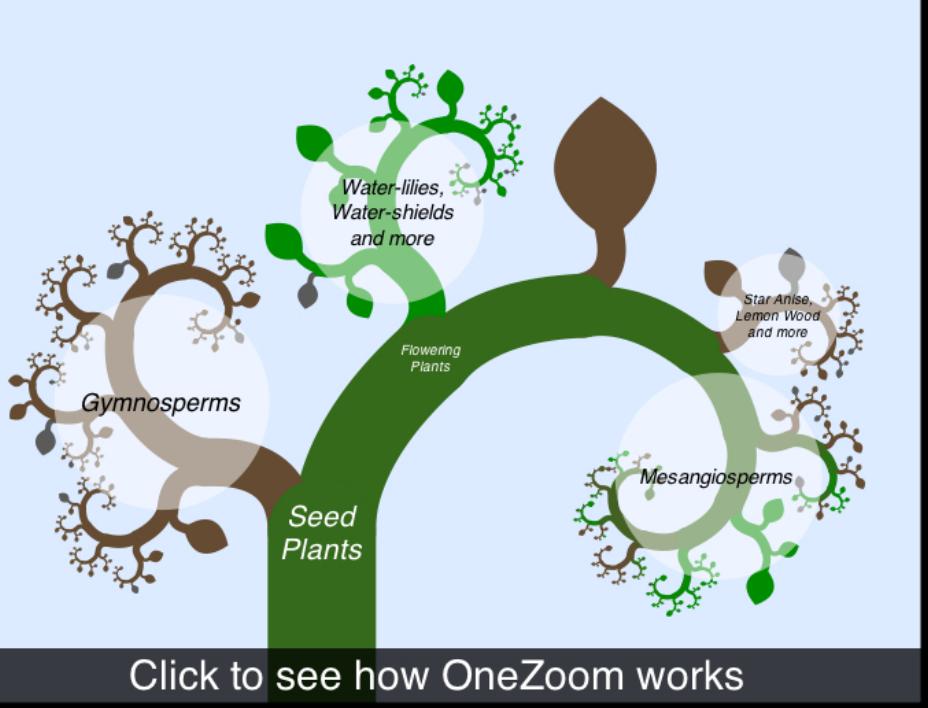


Smith et al. 2013  
PLoS Comput Biol  
9(9): e1003223.

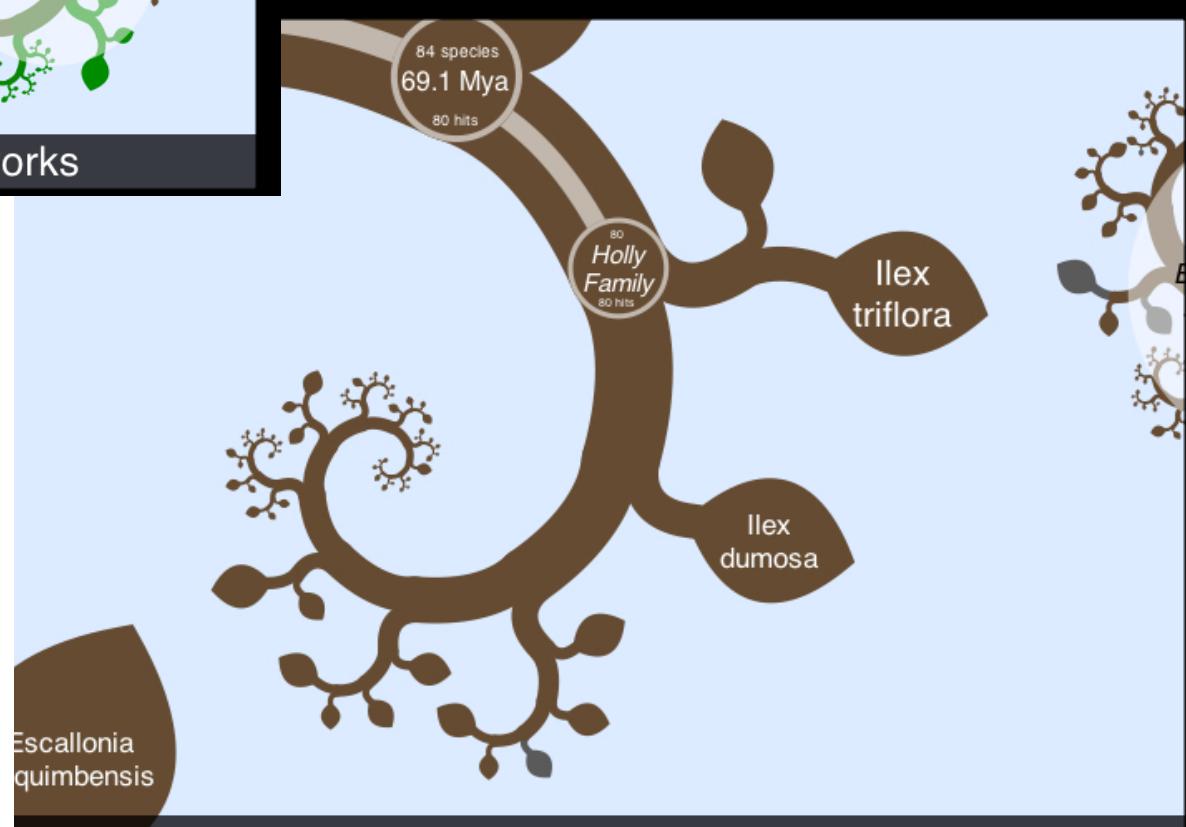
# Visualizing the Tree...

# OneZoom ([www.onezoom.org](http://www.onezoom.org))

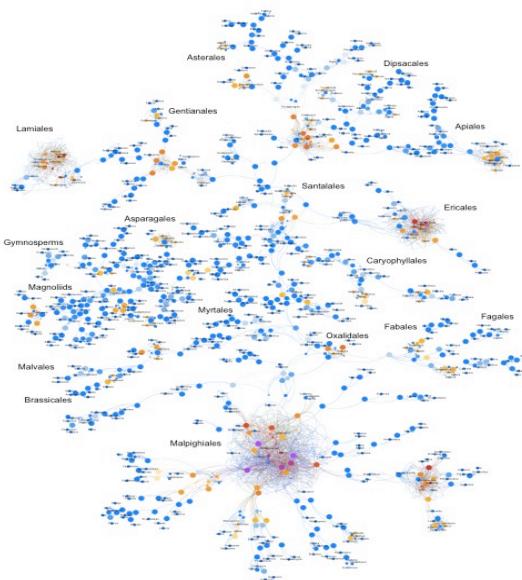
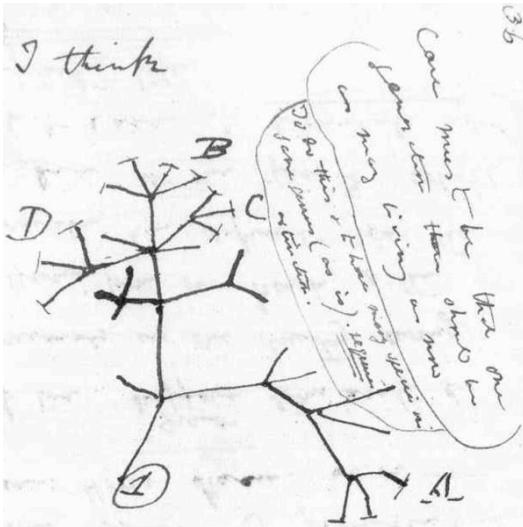




>30,000 plant species

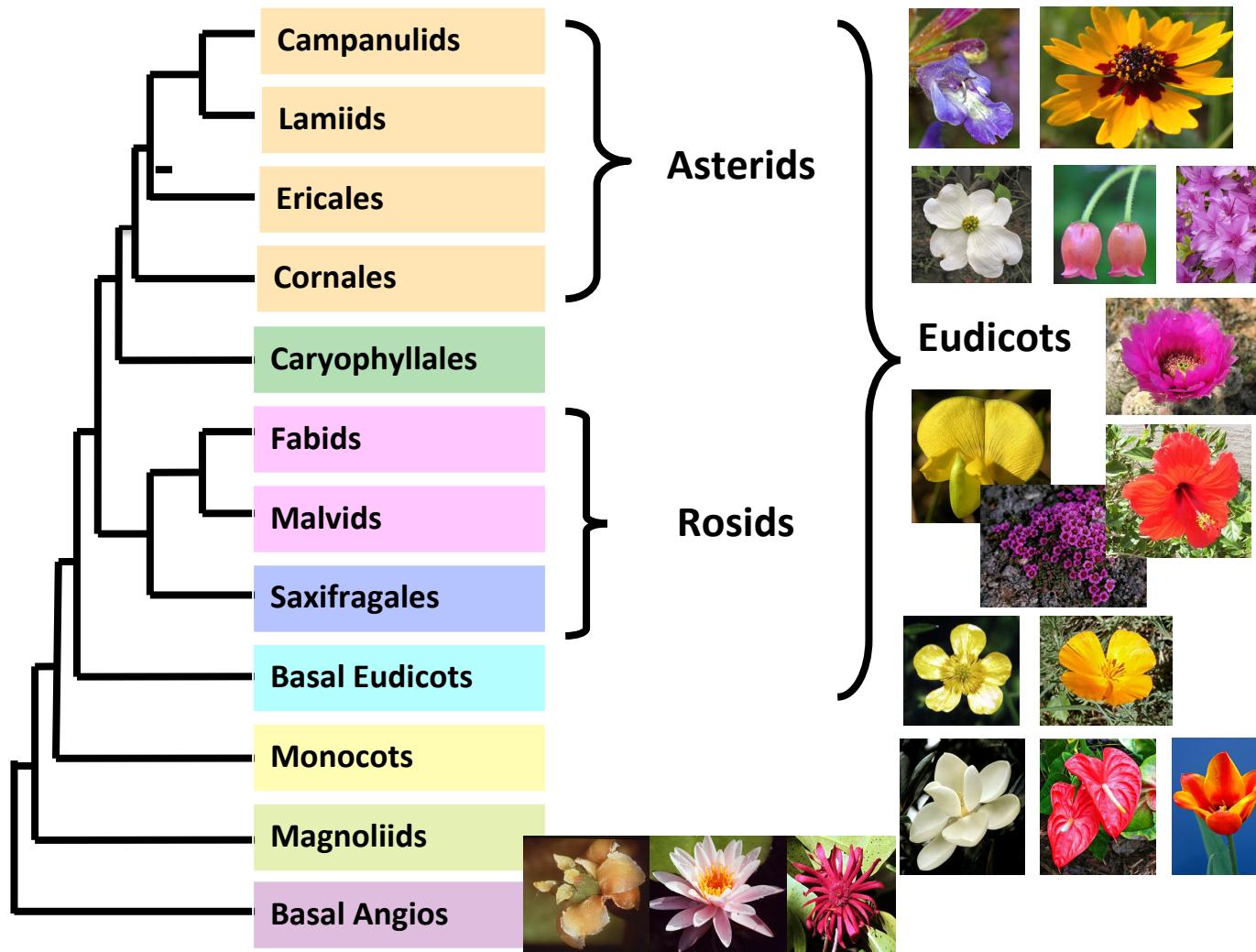


# Building the Tree of Life



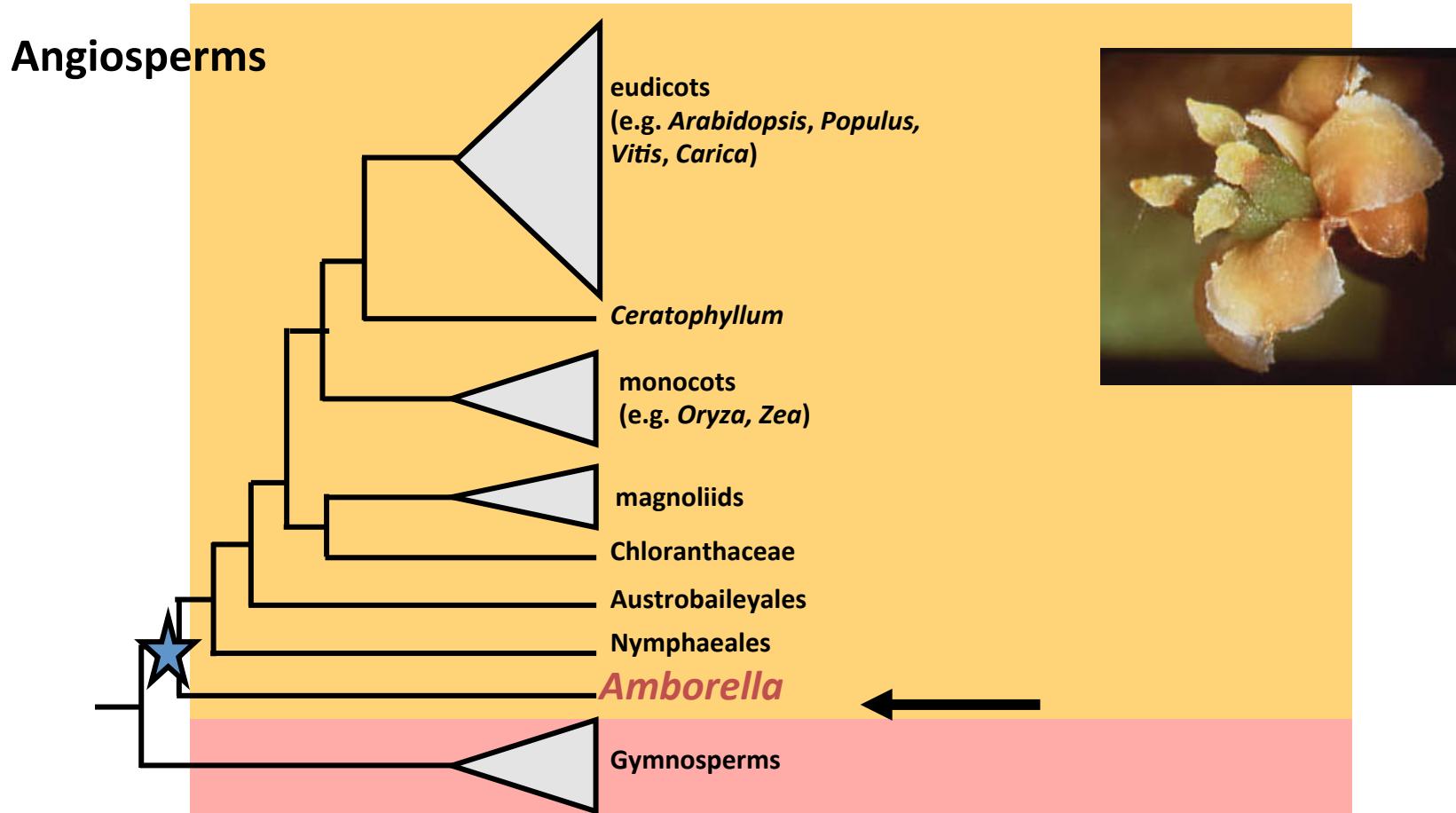
- Exciting, dynamic field:
  - Exploration
  - Innovation in DNA sequencing
  - Advances in computation
  - Novel visualization

# Interpreting & Using the Tree of Life



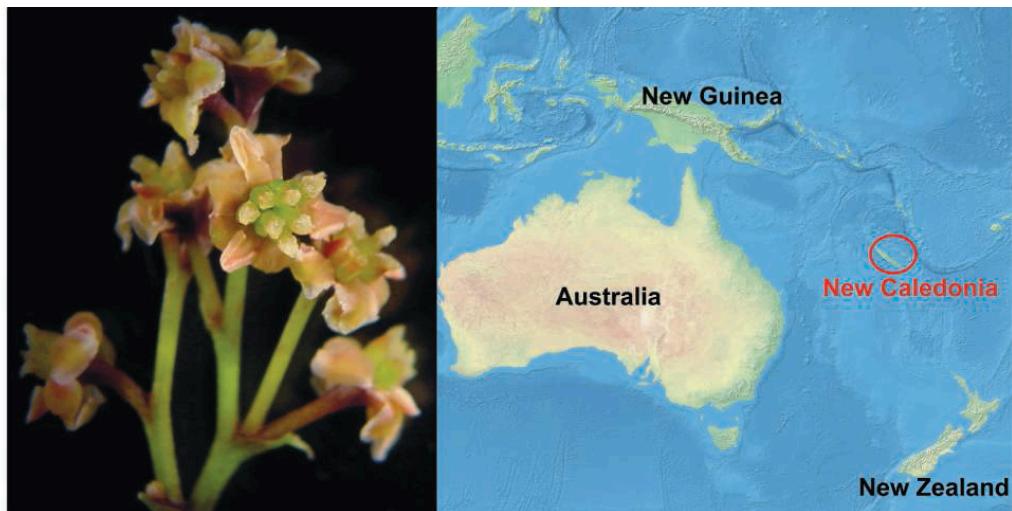
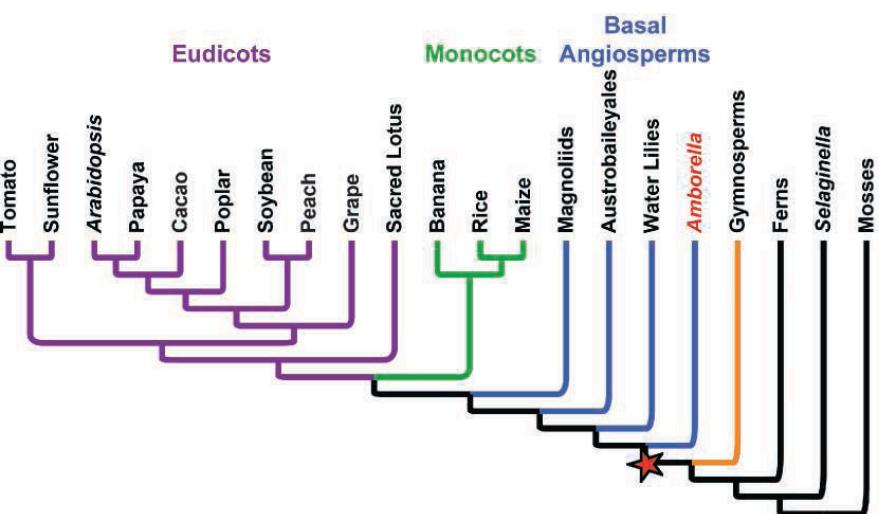
# *Amborella trichopoda*

## Pivotal Position in the Tree of Life



# The *Amborella* Genome and the Evolution of Flowering Plants

*Amborella* Genome Project\*†



contain one or more introns, with 86.9% of the splice sites supported by transcript evidence. Refined gene models were further curated through manual comparisons with *Amborella* complementary DNA transcript assemblies, gene family analyses, and homologous full-length genes from other species (17). Many of the resulting gene

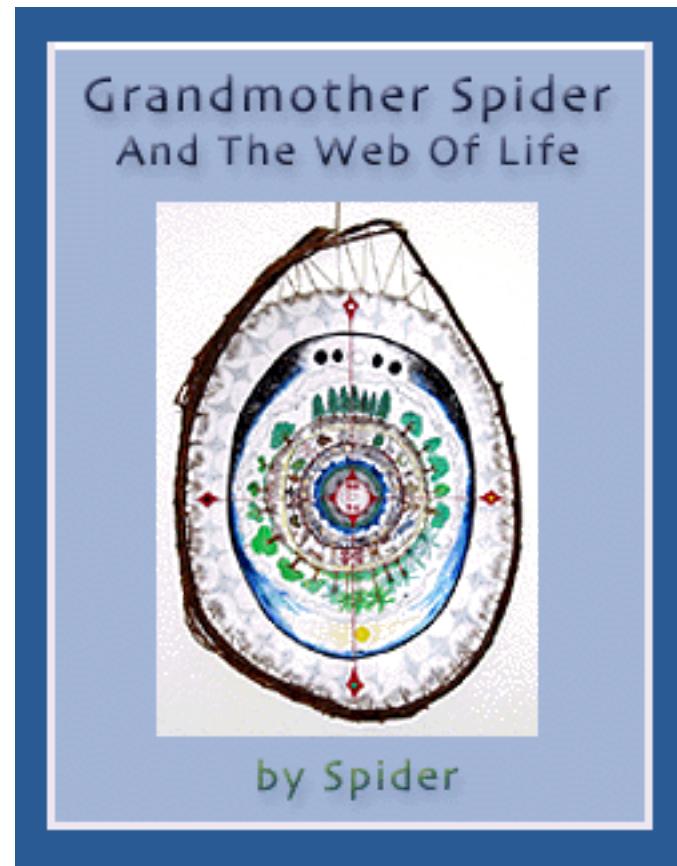


# Life is connected...



*genealogically*

*ecologically*

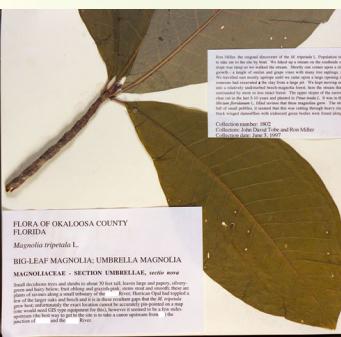




*National center for digitization of biodiversity collections*  
Capture information & images for **1 billion** museum  
specimens in US!

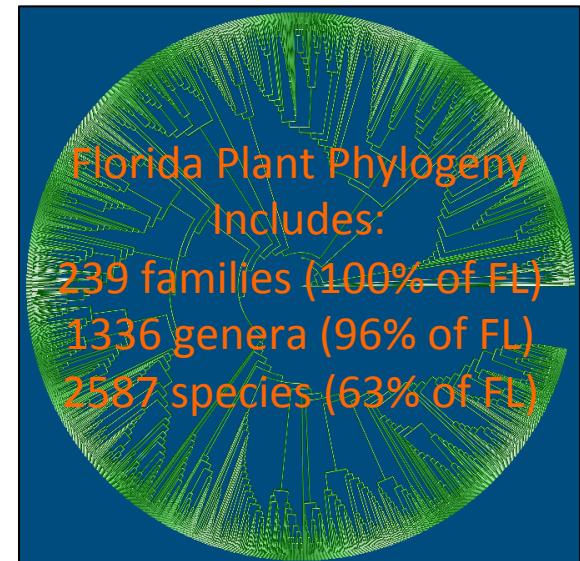
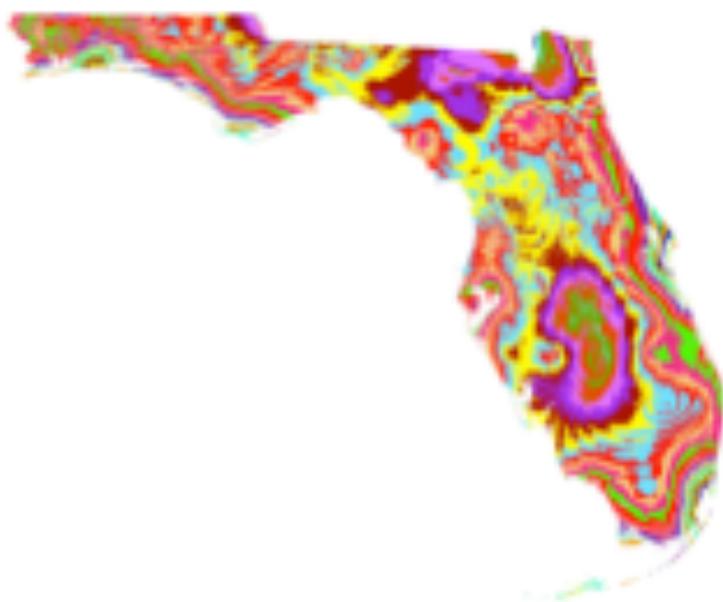
Coordinate digitization and databasing of US collections  
Ingest, serve, integrate data:

Localities  
Dates  
Images



# Florida Plant Diversity in a Changing Climate

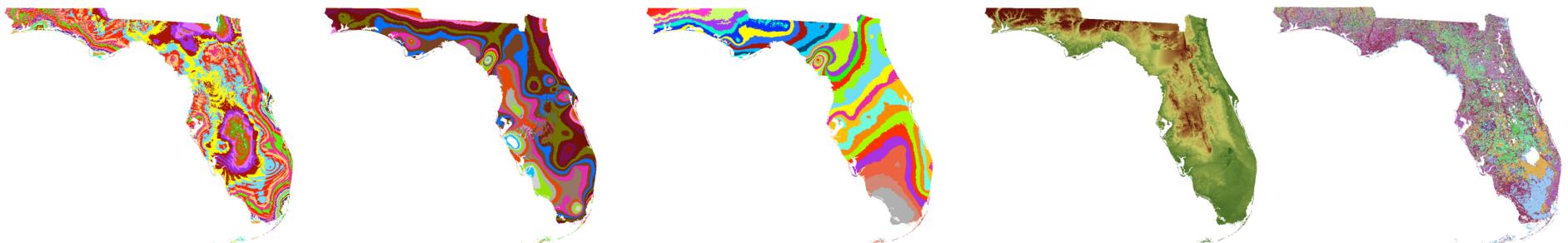
Integrating herbarium specimen data,  
climate change models, and phylogeny



Today, 2050, 2080

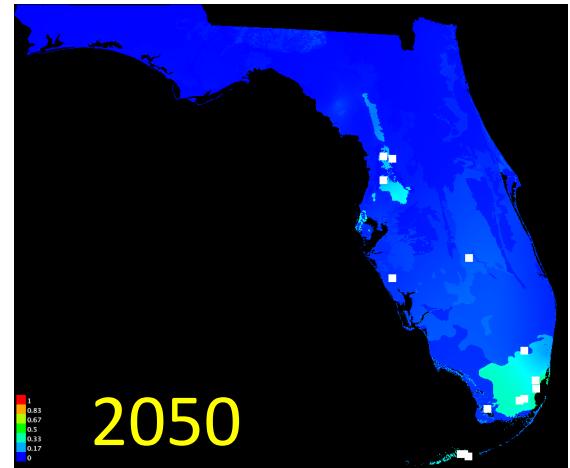
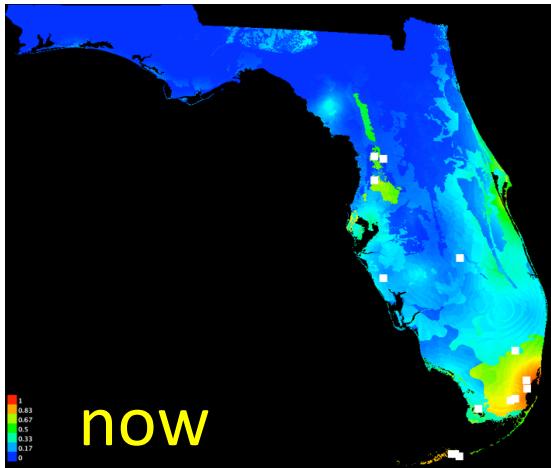
# Modeling the Distribution of Species

- Location information and environmental data
- Software to model the range of each species
- Project onto future climate conditions
- For Florida plants:
  - >2700 plant species (of 4200 species)
  - >511,000 georeferenced points
  - Environmental features: temperature, precipitation, soil, etc.

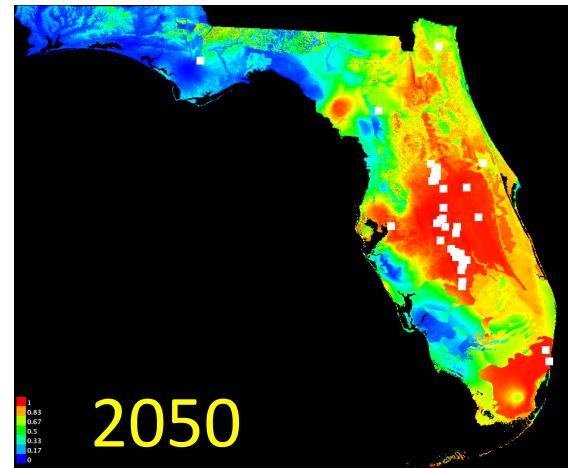
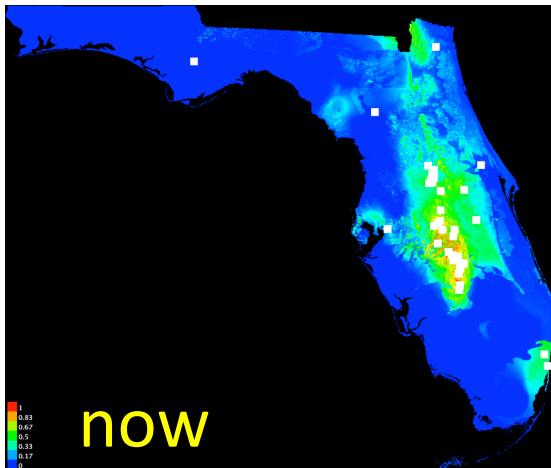


# Responses to Climate Change: Winners & Losers

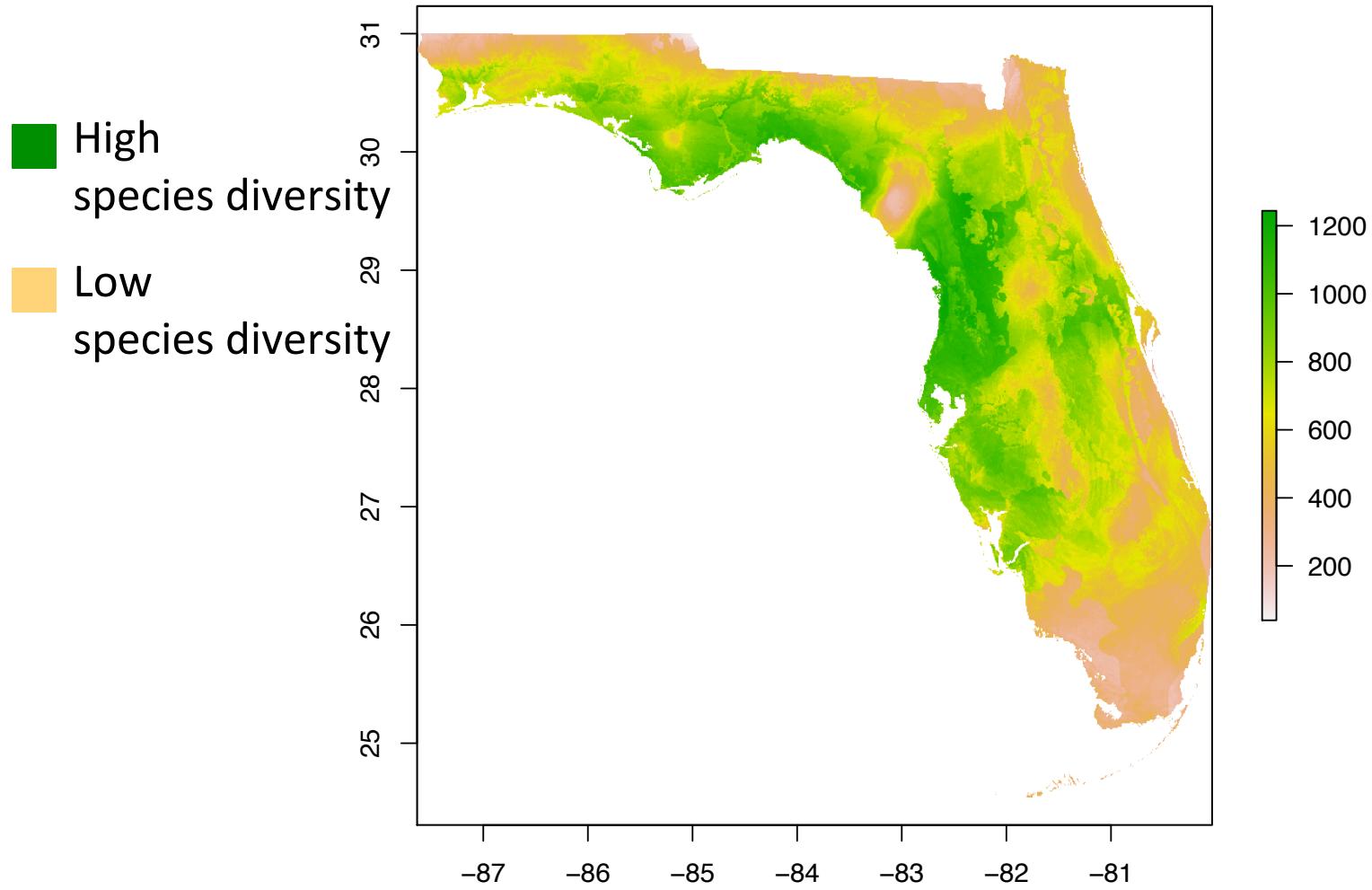
## *Abildgaardia ovata* (flatspike sedge)



## *Prunus geniculata* (scrub plum)



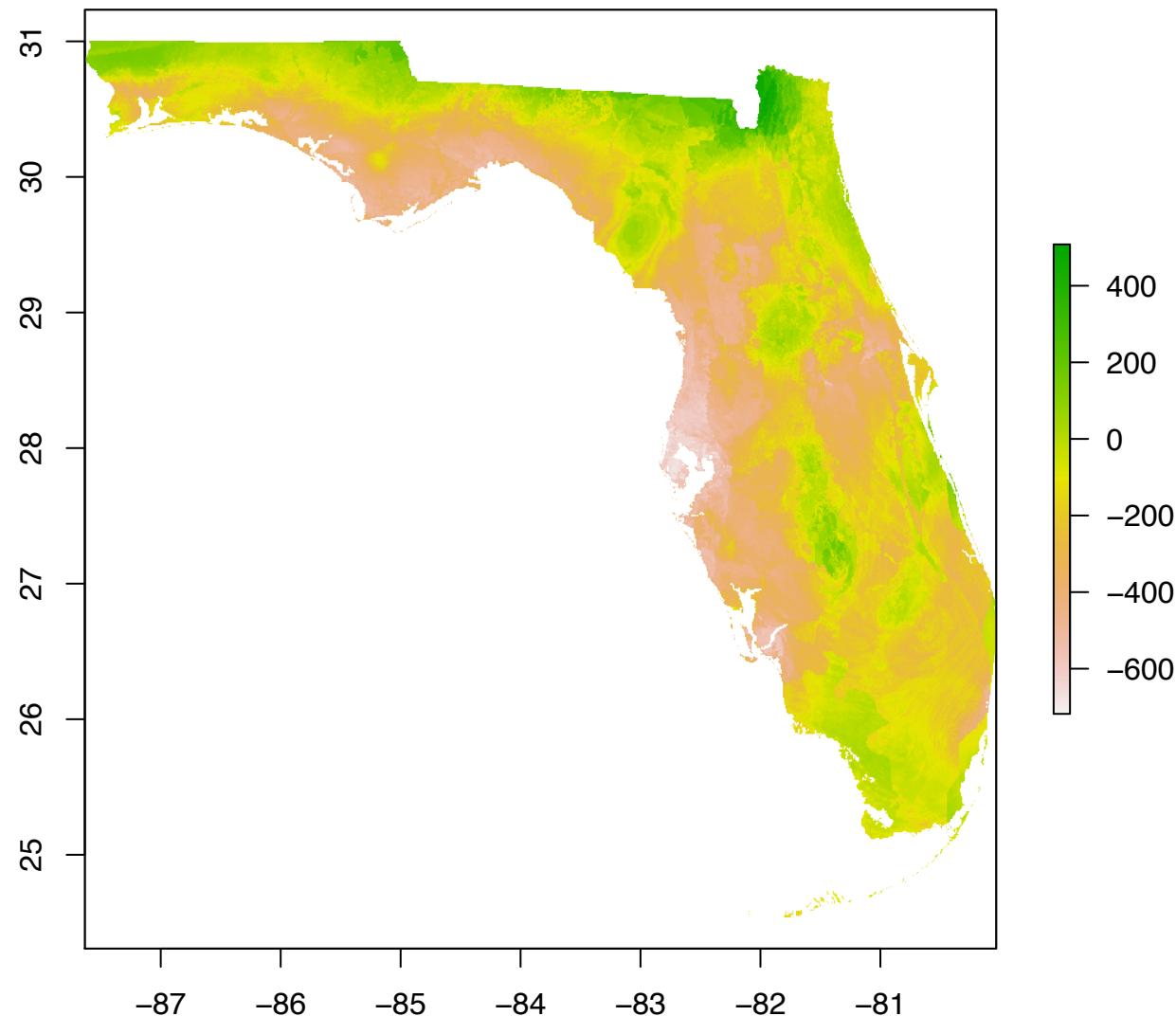
# Florida Plant Diversity Now



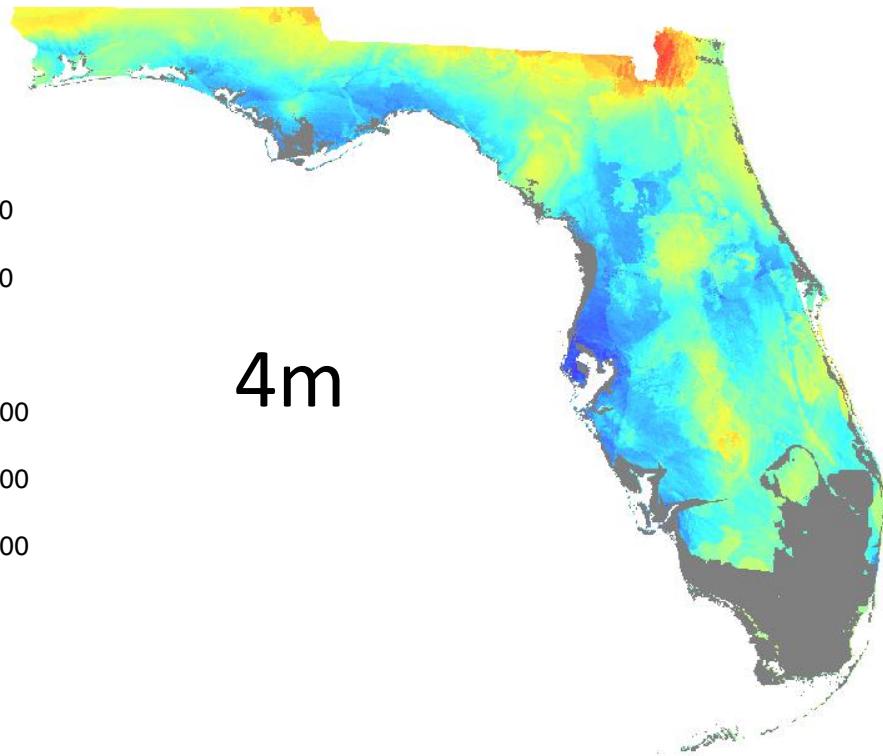
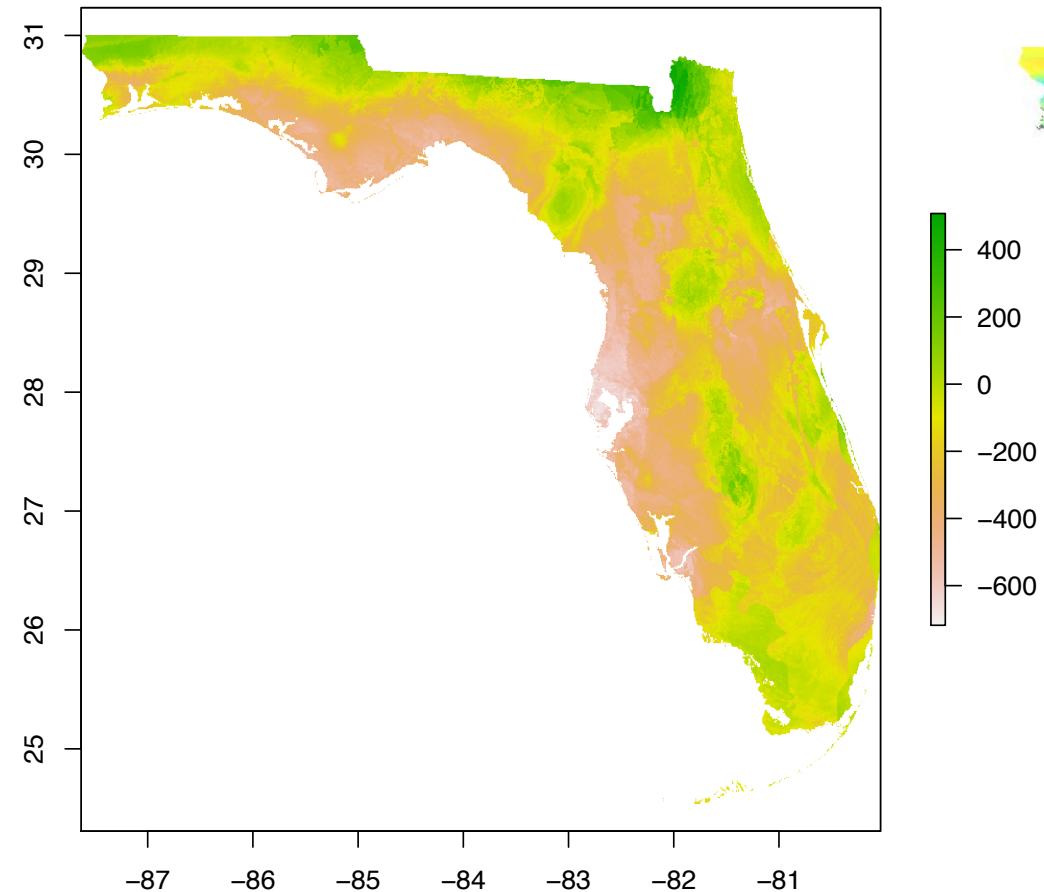
# Between Now and 2050...

- Panhandle species moving NORTH!
- Peninsula species moving SOUTH!

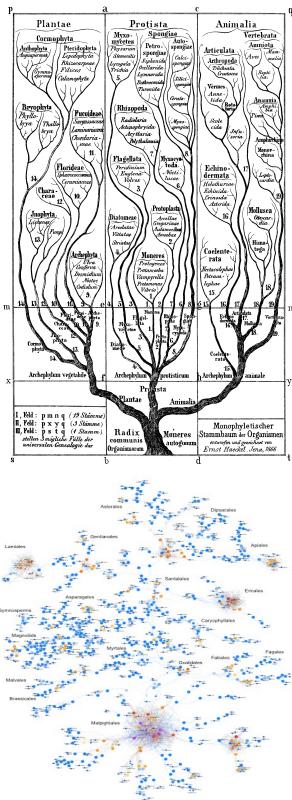
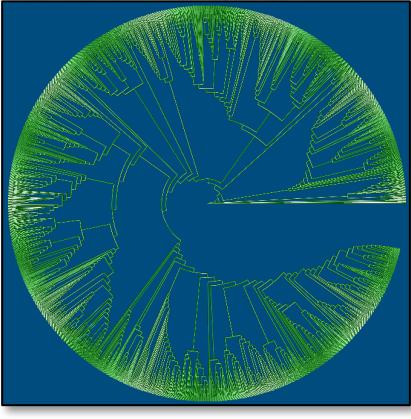
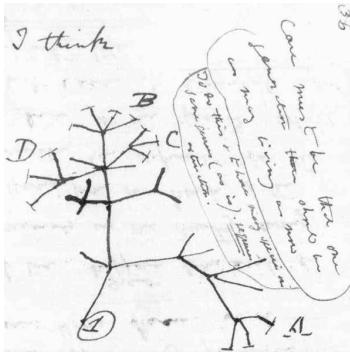
# spp 2050 - #spp now



# Sea Level Rise by 2050



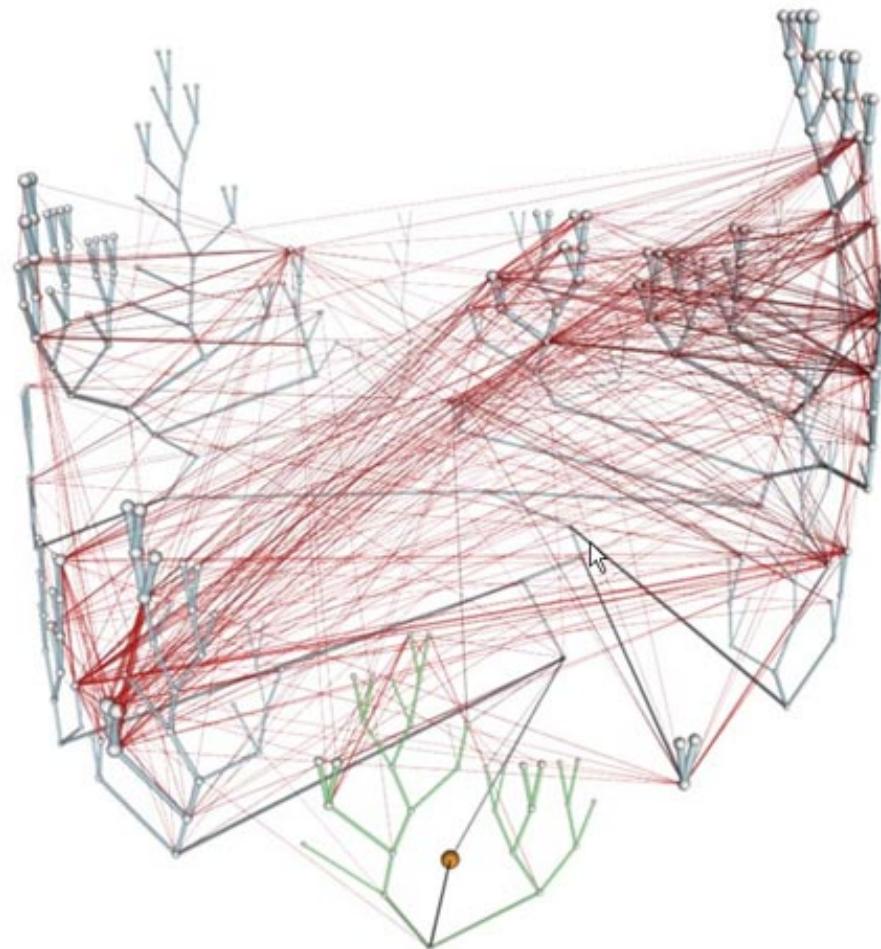
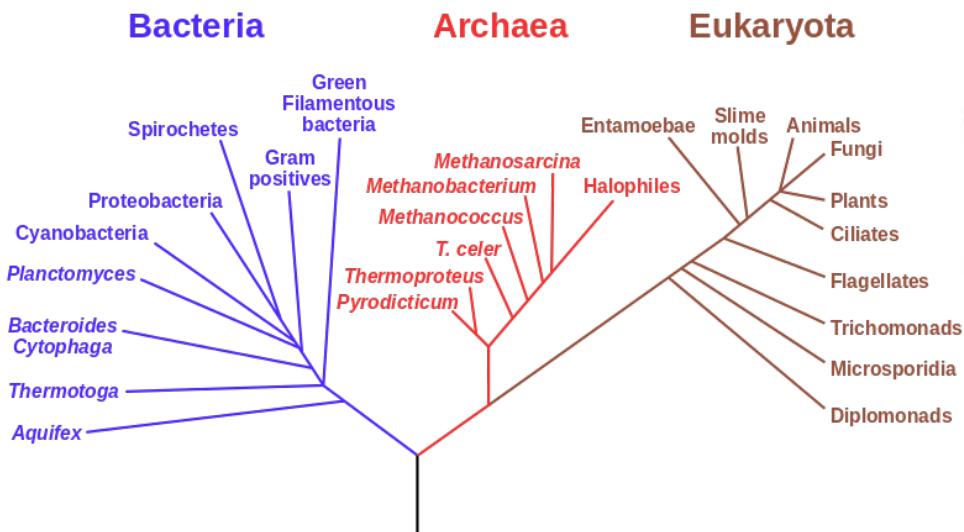
# The Tree of Life



- Exciting, dynamic field:
  - Exploration
  - Innovation in DNA sequencing
  - Advances in computation
  - Novel visualization
  - COUNTLESS USES!



# Bush and Vine of Life? A View of Prokaryotes



# Acknowledgments

- LOTS of colleagues... especially
  - Doug Soltis
  - Angiosperm AToL group
  - *Amborella* Genome Project
- LOTS of students and post-docs... especially
  - Andre Chanderbali
  - Charlotte Germain-Aubrey
  - Julie Allen
- Funding... especially
  - the National Science Foundation



# Where Do You Go From Here?



# Themes & Resources

- The role of PASSION!
- The role of COMMUNITY!
- Opportunities and excitement!
- Pure science AND the greater good!
- MANY resources:
  - Advisors, professors, students, research offices
  - Volunteer, shadow [APPLY TO FLMNH!]
  - Summer experiences:
    - NSF's REUs – stipend and experience
    - Professional societies – travel and research funds
  - Special programs: universities, NSF, societies
  - New colleagues and mentors!



# Themes & Resources

- The role of PASSION!
- The role of COMMUNITY!
- Opportunities and excitement!
- Pure science AND the greater good!
- MANY resources:
  - Advisors, professors, students, research offices
  - Volunteer, shadow [APPLY TO FLMNH!]
  - Summer experiences:
    - NSF's REUs – stipend and experience
    - Professional societies – travel and research funds
  - Special programs: universities, NSF, societies
  - New colleagues and mentors!