Introduction to Botany. Lecture 35

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Outline

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Previous final question: the answer

What is a seed?

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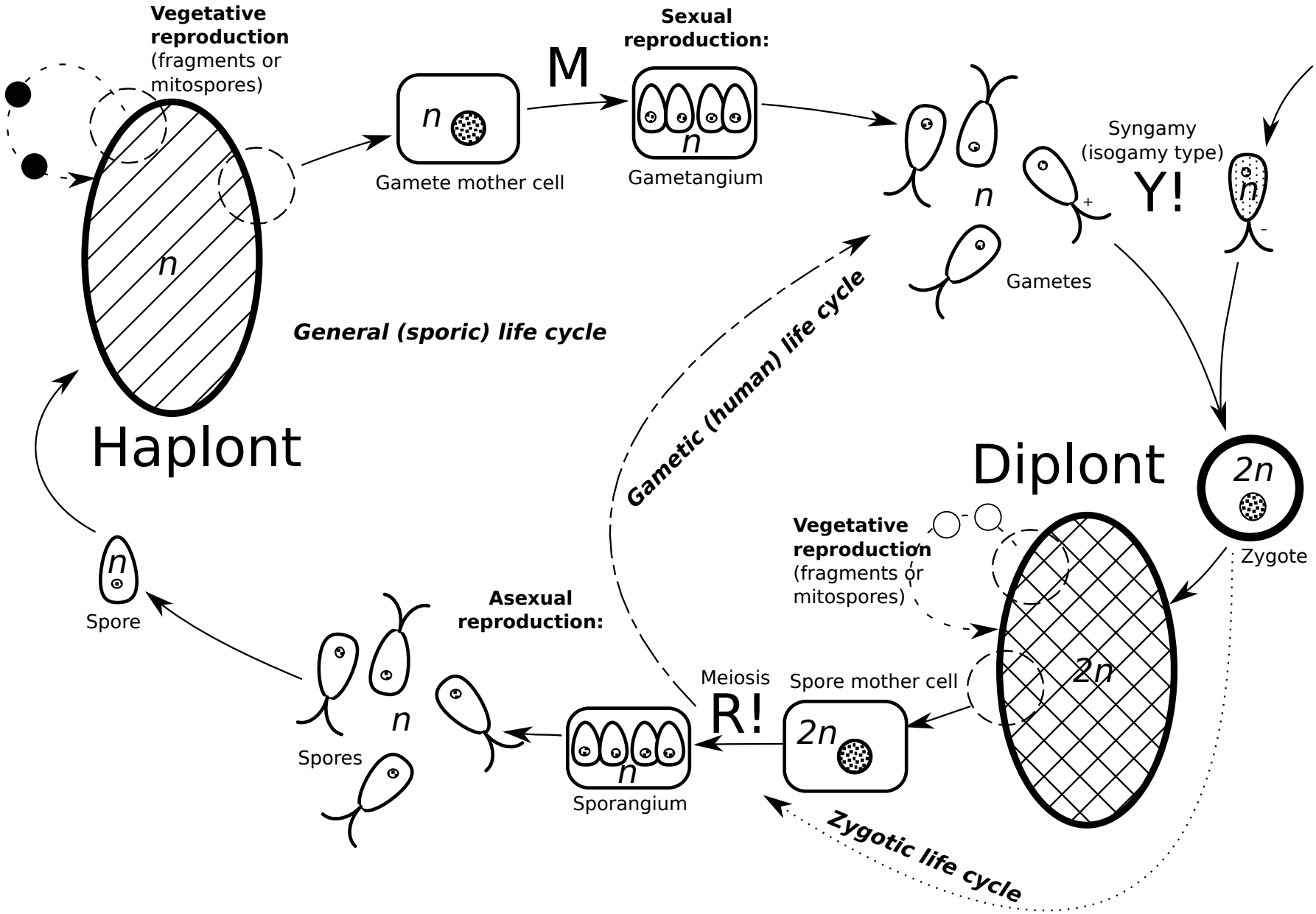
What is a seed?

- Chimeric structure
- Seed = seed coat (ovule: integument + nucellus, mother $2n$) + endosperm$_1$ (female gametophyte, n) + embryo (daughter $2n$)

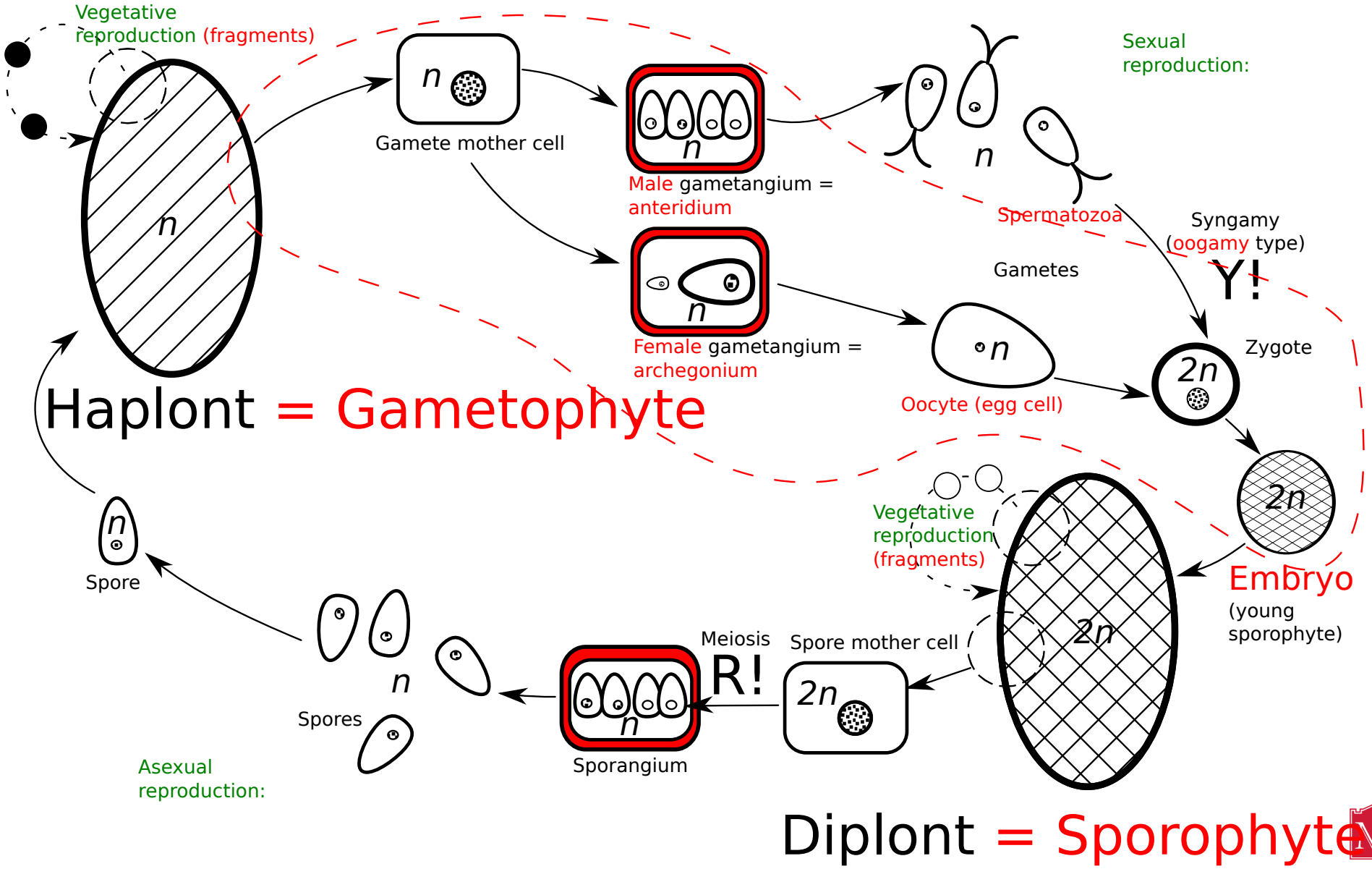
Seed

Origin of seed

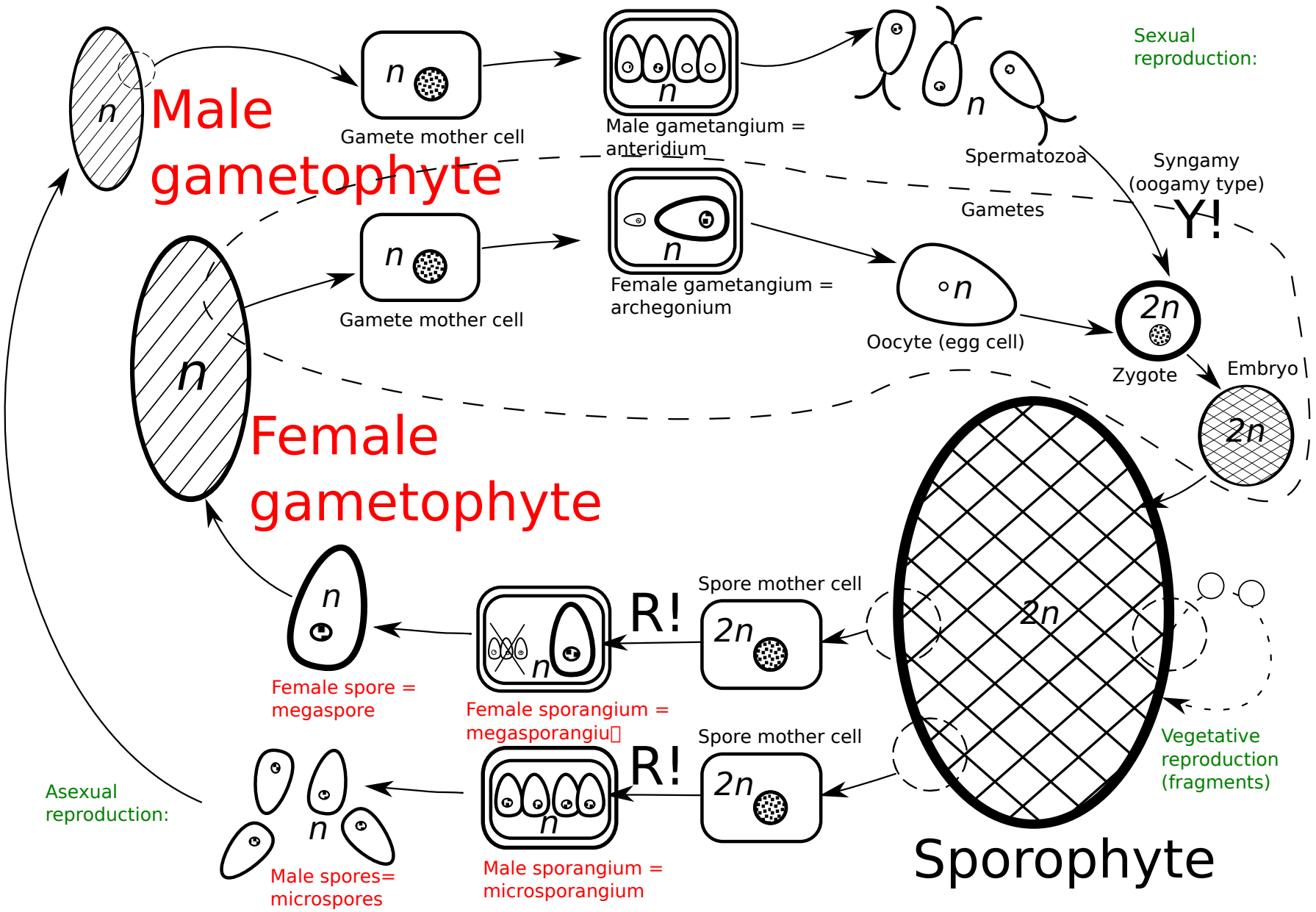
General life cycle



Life cycle of land plants: differences



Heterosporic cycle: differences



Origin of seed

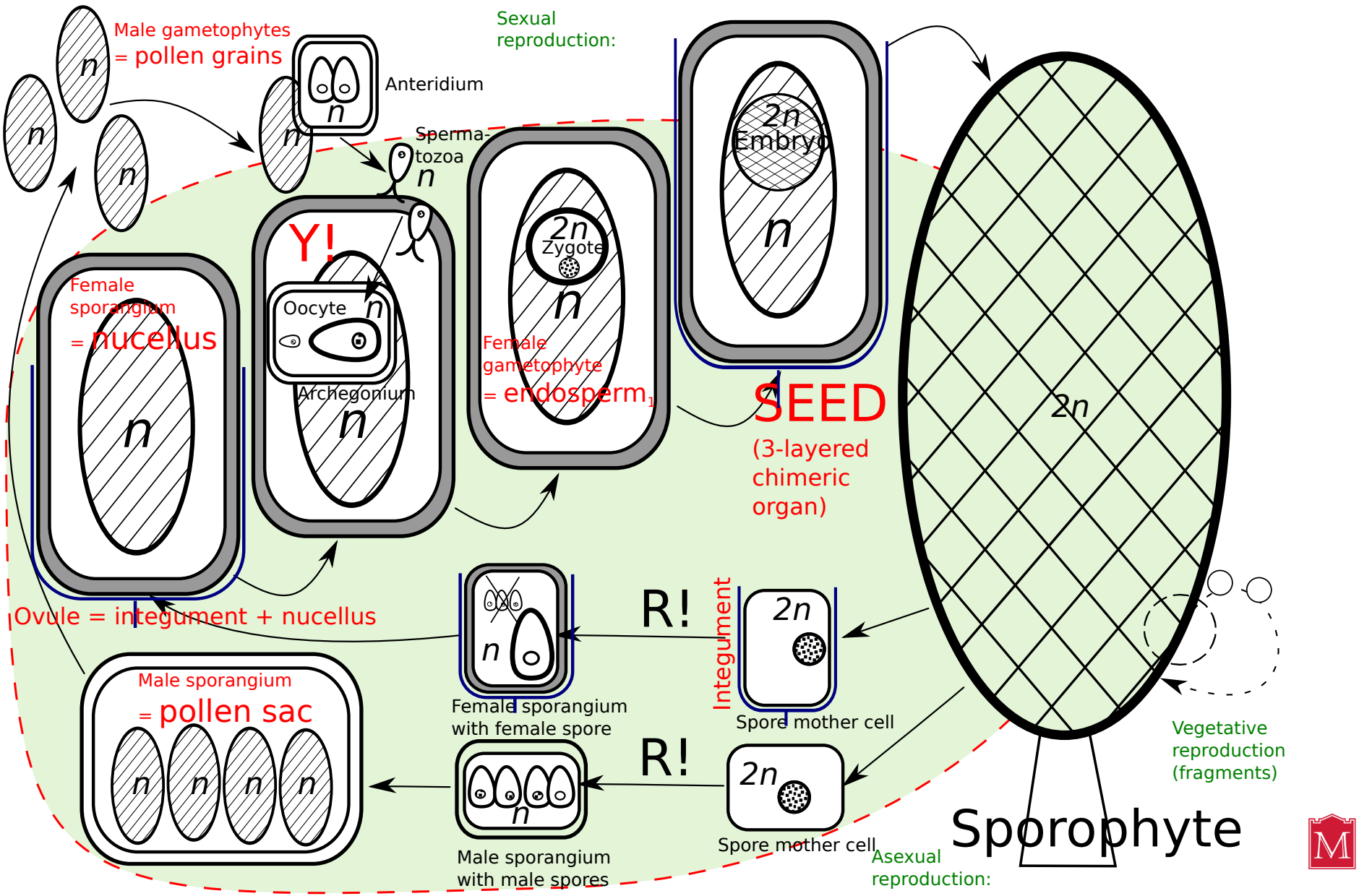
- **“Dinosaur problem”:** without control on the *r*-strategic gametophyte, *K*-strategic tree sporophyte cannot guarantee its reproduction
- **Seed is the result of enforced control of sporophyte over gametophyte**
- Growing of gametophytes, syngamy (fertilization) and growing of daughter sporophyte—everything happens **directly on mother sporophyte**

Seed plants have life cycle where almost all stages happen on mother sporophyte

Terms covered:

- Ovule and integument
- Nucellus and pollen sac
- Pollen grains and endosperm
- Seed

Seed plant cycle: differences



The seed

- Seed is a **chimeric organ** with three layers: (1) mother sporophyte tissue (integument + nucellus), (2) female gametophyte tissue (endosperm) and (3) daughter sporophyte (embryo)
- Biggest disadvantages of having seed are: (a) low probability of fertilization (pollination needed) and (b) overall slowness of cycle

Seed
Diversity of seed plants

Spermatophyta: seed plants

- $\approx$ 1000 species of non-angiosperms and $\approx 250,000$ species of angiosperms (99.6% of seed plants)
- Sporic life cycle with sporophyte predominance and **seed**
- Gametophyte is reduced to cells inside ovule or inside pollen grain. Minimum number of cells is 3 for male gametophyte (pollen grain) and 4 for female gametophyte (embryo sac of angiosperms). Anteridia are reduced. In angiosperms and Gnetopsida, archegonia are also reduced.
- Sporophyte always starts development from embryo located inside nutrition tissue, endosperm$_1$ (female gametophyte) or endosperm$_2$ (second embryo)
- Have axillary buds
- Homoiohydric plants (same as ferns)
- Have secondary thickening

Spermatophyta classes

- **Ginkgoopsida**, ginkgo class
- **Cycadopsida**, cycads
- **Pinopsida**, conifers
- **Gnetopsida**, gnetophytes or chlamydosperms
- **Angiospermae**, or Magnoliopsida, flowering plants

Ginkgoopsida

- Smallest class, only one species (!), Chinese tree *Gigkgo biloba* which became extinct several thousand years ago but saved as a ”church tree”.
- Distinctive triangle-shaped leaves with dichotomous venation
- Ovules are solitary or paired; microsporangia are in catkin-like structures; has sexual chromosomes (!)
- Pollen grains produce two mutli-flagellate spermatozoa which swim to large oocyte
- Seeds are fruit-like (generally edible), become ripe laying on a ground for a long time
- Almost no phytophagous insects damage *Ginkgo* leaves; the fungal symbiont of *Ginkgo* also belongs to separate class inside basidiomycetes, Bartheletiomycetes.

Ginkgo biloba ovules

Ginkgo biloba male organs

Ginkgo biloba seeds

Cycadopsida

- Two families, dozen genera and $\approx$ 300 species distributed mostly in tropics
- Palm-like plants, with large (and usually very rigid) pinnate leaves
- Stem structure is not similar to conifers and *Ginkgo*; cycads have large pith and anomalous secondary thickening via multiple cambium rings
- Ovules are attached to modified leaves (sporophylls) and usually gathered in large upright cones; microsporangia are always in cones
- Also have multi-flagellate spermatozoa, archegonia and large oocyte
- Large seeds are animal-distributed; life cycle is extremely slow (several years from initiation of cone to germination of seed).

Cycadopsida families

- Two families, sometimes even placed in different orders:
  - Cycadaceae, whith only genus *Cycas*. They do not have female cones, ovules are attached to leaves which are not radically modified. Leaves have fiddleheads (same in ferns!).
  - Zamiaceae, with all other genera (*Zamia integrifolia* is native to USA). Have female cones.

Cycas sp.: young leaflets form fiddleheads

Male *Cycas* sp. in dry season

Cycas sp. seeds

Encephalartos gratus (Zamiaceae)

Zamia integrifolia (Zamiaceae)

For Further Reading

A. Shipunov.
Introduction to Botany [Electronic resource].
2015.
Mode of access:
http://ashipunov.info/shipunov/school/biol_154