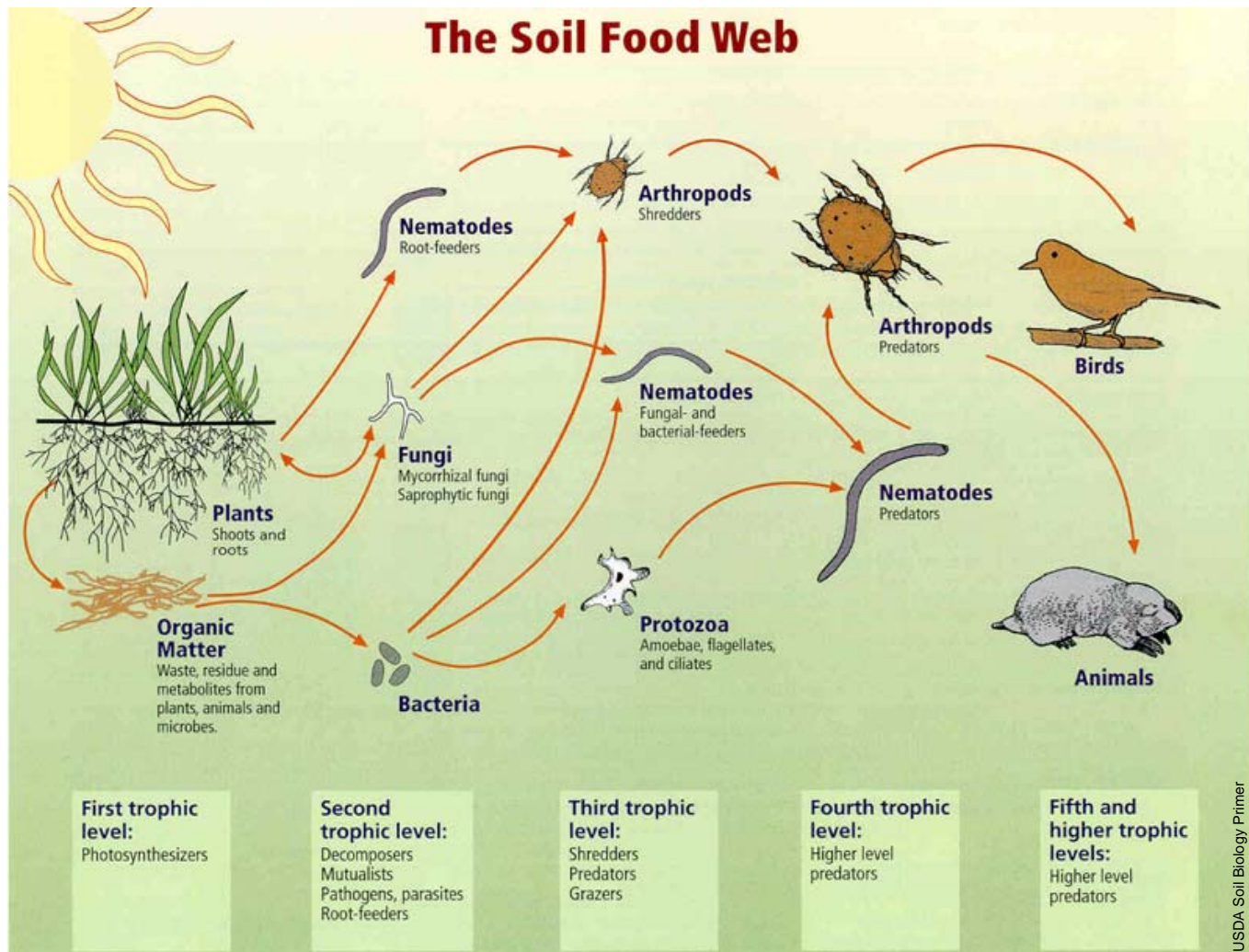




SOIL FOOD WEB – ENERGY IN THE SOIL

The soil food web is the community of organisms living in the soil. The food web diagram below shows the series of conversions of energy and nutrients (represented by arrows) as one organism eats another!



Primary producers (e.g. plants, lichens, moss, bacteria, ...) use the sun's energy to fix carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Most other soil organisms get energy and carbon by consuming organic compounds found in plants, other organisms, and 'waste' products.

Soil organic matter is a storehouse for the energy and nutrients used by plants and other organisms. Bacteria, fungi, and other soil dwellers transform and release nutrients from organic matter.

Soil organisms play a role in the conversion of soil organic matter to humus, a relatively stable form of carbon that can be sequestered in soil for decades.