



STARRY TRAILS

JUNE 2017

The beautiful ringed planet, Saturn, will be the highlight of the month of June. Saturn reaches its peak on June 15 and the rings are at their biggest tilt since 2003, making structure easier to see than normal! Look in the southeast around 11 pm (Illustration 1). The king of the planets, Jupiter continues to shine brilliantly in the south after sunset (Illustration 2). Also, it's time to celebrate the first day of Summer on June 21st and the Solar Eclipse is two months away!!

With the long days of summer, our Starry hike will not start until 10:00pm. So grab your Starry Trail Map, binoculars, bug spray and a light jacket. Our hike begins in the west or where you see the beautiful sunset colors. You will see the bright star, Regulus, which is part of the constellation Leo, the Lion. To the right and down slightly are two stars that look almost identical, Gemini, the Twins (Illustration 3). Turn left to face south. The brilliant object that catches your eye is the planet Jupiter! Pick up your binoculars and focus on Jupiter. If you are steady, you may see a few pinpoints of light around Jupiter. These would be the largest moons of Jupiter! When you view Jupiter through a telescope, you will clearly see the four Galilean Moons. Below Jupiter is a bright star, Spica, which is a part of the constellation Virgo.

Turn to the right or direction north and you will see the Big Dipper, high in the sky. Take the two stars at the end of the cup and draw an imaginary line to the next bright star. You have reached the North Star! The North Star, or Polaris, is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. Queen Cassiopeia, the w-shape, is very low in the north (Illustration 4).

Hike back to the Big Dipper. Arc off of the handle to the orange-yellow star, Arcturus. Turn to the right or east. Continue to look high overhead. Slightly down and to the left, of Arcturus, you will come upon a semi-circle of stars. It looks almost like a necklace, but actually it is the Northern Crown or Corona Borealis. I think it looks like a smiley face! Hike down and to the left from Corona Borealis. There you will see a keystone shape. This is the body of Hercules, the bravest and strongest hero! Binocular time! Take your binoculars and scan around the part of Hercules facing Corona. Do you see the fuzzy object? This is the finest Globular Star Cluster (M13) in the northern skies! Look for the bright blue, white star down and to the left of Hercules. This star is Vega, which is a part of the Summer Triangle (Illustration 5).

For our final stop, turn slightly to the right to face southeast. The bright red, orange star is Antares, the heart of the constellation Scorpius. To the left of Antares you will see a golden colored object, the planet Saturn!!

What a great way to kick off summer! Take a few minutes to enjoy fireflies twinkling!

Next month..... Saturn, Jupiter and the summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 1 – First Quarter Moon.

June 3 – Moon passes north of Jupiter.

June 9 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon, Rose Moon or Flower Moon. It is also the most distant Full Moon of the year.

June 15 – Saturn reaches its peak magnitude.

June 17 – Last Quarter Moon.

June 21 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 12:24 am.

June 23 – New Moon.

June 30 – First Quarter Moon.

The planet Venus shines brilliantly in the eastern sky before sunrise!

Brightest Stars

West - Castor, Pollux, Regulus. **Overhead** – Arcturus. **South** – Spica. **East** – Vega. **Southeast** – Antares.

Binocular Highlights The Moon, Jupiter, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13

Telescope Highlights The Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, M51, M13, M57, M3, M81, M82, M10, M12, M92, M94

Starry Trails is a fun & easy way to explore the night sky as it appears from your own backyard!

Journey over to **StarryTrails.com** & get everything you need to navigate the night sky! Starry Trails is a free publication & your able to make copies to pass along to your friends & family so they can learn and enjoy the night sky with you! **You can Follow [Starry Trails on Facebook](#) for weekly discussions & special sky events!**

Night Sky Illustrations created by Suzie Dills using Starry Night Backyard & Stellarium.

Illustrations courtesy of www.CassandraDills.com

Written by Suzie Dills – Remember to download your Illustrations & Star Map!