



STARRY TRAILS

MAY 2017

Whether you are a night owl or early bird, you will be able to enjoy one of the two brightest planets! The king of the planets, Jupiter shines brilliantly in the south after sunset and Venus dazzles in the east before sunrise. By the way... 3 months until the Solar Eclipse!

For our hike, we will begin around 9:30pm. Let's grab our jacket, Starry Trail Map and binoculars. We can still enjoy a few more hikes without mosquitoes! We will start by facing west. The two stars that look almost the same are Gemini, the Twins. The bright red-orange star to the right of Gemini is Capella. To the left of Gemini is the star Procyon (Illustration 1).

Turn to the left or direction south. Look up and a brilliant object will catch your eye, the planet Jupiter! Pick up your binoculars and focus in on Jupiter. If you are steady, you may see a few pinpoint 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, you will see a bright blue star. This is Spica, part of the constellation Virgo. By the way, Virgo hosts the sky's richest zone of galaxies! It is simply great telescope viewing in this part of the sky. Head back to Jupiter. Up and to the right look for the shape of a backwards question mark. This is the head of Leo, the Lion. How about a challenge? Take your binoculars and scan to the right of Leo, almost to Gemini, the Twins. Do you see the beautiful Beehive Star Cluster (M44)?

Trek to the opposite part of the sky and you will find the Big Dipper, high overhead, pouring water out of the cup, like the spring rains! Take the two stars at the end of the cup of the Big Dipper 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 (Illustration 2). Queen Cassiopeia, the W shape, is very low in the north or below the Little Dipper. Check out Leo, the Lion, to the left of the flat part of the Big Dipper (Illustration 3)

Turn to the right or east. Look high, almost overhead, and arc off the handle of the Big Dipper to the bright yellow-orange star, Arcturus. Just below Arcturus and to the left, 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 Hercules. Do you see the fuzzy object? This is the finest globular Star Cluster (M13) in the northern skies! If you head down and to the left, you will spot the bright star, Vega (Illustration 4).

Wow! Another great night of Stargazing! Take one last breath of fresh spring air and head inside.

Next month, signs of summer and great views of Saturn & Jupiter!

Highlights

May 2 – First Quarter Moon.

May 6 – Eta Aquarid Meteor Shower peaks.

May 7 – The Moon passes north of Jupiter.

May 10 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Flower Moon.

May 18 – Last Quarter Moon.

May 22 – The Crescent Moon and Venus in the eastern sky before sunrise.

May 25 – New Moon.

Brightest Stars: **West** – Procyon, Castor, Pollux, Capella. **Overhead** – Regulus. **East** – Arcturus, Spica, Vega.

Binocular Highlights The Moon, Jupiter, Beehive Cluster M44, Deep sky objects around Capella (M36, 37, 38), Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13.

Telescope Highlights The Moon, Jupiter, M10, M12, M51, M35, M44, M13, M57, M3, M81, M82, M92, M104, M35, 36, 37, 38 (near Capella).

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!