



STARRY TRAILS

JUNE 2018

The beautiful ringed planet, Saturn, will be the highlight of the month of June! Saturn reaches opposition on June 27th, so it will be visible from dusk to dawn. Look in the southeast around 10 pm (Illustration 1). The king of the planets, Jupiter continues to shine brilliantly in the south and Venus in the west, after sunset (Illustration 2). Notice Jupiter & Venus continue to get closer to each other! Mercury makes guest appearance the last two weeks in June and will join Venus & the Crescent Moon in the west on the 15th & 16th (Illustration 3). By months end, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter & Saturn make a spectacular line up from northwest to southeast (Illustration 4)! Mars rises after midnight and doubles in brightness by the end of June! Also, it's time to celebrate the first day of Summer on June 21st!

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. Take a few minutes to enjoy firefly's twinkling! Our hike begins in the west or where you see the beautiful sunset colors. Dazzling Venus will catch your eye! Above Venus you will see the bright star, Regulus, which is part of the constellation Leo, the Lion. Close to Venus are two stars that look almost identical, Gemini, the Twins (Illustration 5). 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. The bright star to the right of Jupiter is 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 7).

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!!

Fantastic planet viewing! What a great way to kick off summer!

Next month..... Mars at its brightest since 2003, Saturn, Jupiter and the summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 3 – Moon passes north of Mars.

June 6 – Last Quarter Moon.

June 13 – New Moon.

June 15, 16, & 17 – Crescent Moon & Venus in the western sky after sunset.

June 19 – Venus passes north of the Beehive Star Cluster after sunset in the western sky.

June 20 – First Quarter Moon.

June 21 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 6:07 am.

June 23 – Moon passes north of Jupiter.

June 25 – Mercury south of Pollux in the western sky after sunset.

June 27 – Saturn at opposition.

June 27 – Moon passes north of Saturn.

June 28 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon, Rose Moon or Flower Moon.

June 30 - Moon passes north of Mars.

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, Venus, Jupiter, M51, M13, M57, M3, M81, M82, M10, M12, M92, M94

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

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