



STARRY TRAILS

JUNE 2019

It's time to celebrate the first day of summer on June 21st and the return of the king of the planets, Jupiter! Jupiter reaches opposition on June 10th and dazzles all night long! Jupiter is brilliant in southeastern sky (Illustration 1)! But shortly after sunset, you want to check out Mars and Mercury low in the western sky (Illustration 2). On the nights of June 17 & 18th, Mercury and Mars will be less than a degree apart!

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. Trek up and you will see the bright star, Regulus, which is part of the constellation Leo, the Lion. Down and to the right are two stars that look almost identical, Gemini, the Twins. To the left you will find the star Procyon. (Illustration 3). Turn left to face southeast. 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 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. The bright star to the right of Jupiter is Antares, the heart of Scorpius.

Turn to the opposite part of the sky 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).

What a great way to kick off summer!

Next month.... the planet Saturn returns and the summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 3 – New Moon.

June 4 – Moon passes south of Mercury.

June 5 – Moon passes south of Mars.

June 10 – First Quarter Moon.

June 16 – Moon passes north of Jupiter.

June 17 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon, Rose Moon or Flower Moon.

June 17 & 18 – Mars and Mercury less than a degree apart in the western sky after sunset.

June 18 – Moon passes south of Saturn.

June 21 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 11:54 am.

June 25 - Last Quarter Moon.

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, Mercury, Mars, 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 backyard! Journey over to **StarryTrails.com** & get everything you need to navigate the night sky from sky maps, illustrations, even audio and video versions of Starry Trails!

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 Cassandra Dills

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