



STARRY TRAILS

JUNE 2020

Mercury reaches its highest point in the west-northwest sky on June 4 and is a great target the first two weeks of June (Illustration 1). Jupiter, Saturn and Mars continue their predawn show (Illustration 2). Brilliant Jupiter rises three hours after sunset at the beginning of June and less than an hour at month's end. Saturn will be 5 degrees east of Jupiter through most of June. Also, it is time to celebrate the first day of summer on June 20th!

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 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 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 planets Jupiter and Saturn return and the summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 3 – Venus is in inferior conjunction.

June 4 – Mercury at greatest elongation, 24 degrees east of the Sun.

June 5 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon, Rose Moon or Flower Moon.

June 8 – The Moon passes south of Jupiter & Saturn.

June 12 – The Moon passes south of Mars & Neptune.

June 13 – Last Quarter Moon.

June 16 – The Moon passes south of Uranus in the predawn sky.

June 19 – The Moon passes north of Venus in the predawn sky.

June 20 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 5:44 pm.

June 21 - New Moon.

June 28 – First Quarter Moon.

June 30 – Mercury is in inferior conjunction.

Brightest Stars:

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

Binocular Highlights: The Moon, Mercury, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13

Telescope Highlights: The Moon, Mercury, 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!