



STARRY TRAILS

June 2022

We are in for a rare sight in our morning sky for June! As we head into June, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn continue to put on a spectacular show in the predawn sky. Mercury joins the show on June 16 and can be found to the lower left of Venus, binoculars may be needed. The real thrill will be that the five visible planets will be stretched across the ecliptic in the correct order from their distance from the Sun (Illustration 1)!

June 24 is the best morning to take in this rarity, 50 minutes before sunrise, which is at 5:54 am. The Moon will be positioned between Venus and Mars. So, the visible object line-up will be Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn! Uranus, Neptune and the asteroid Vesta will join this phenomenal line up, but a telescope will be needed to view these three objects (Illustration 2).

Also, it is 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. 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 summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 7 – First Quarter Moon.

June 11 – Venus passes south of Uranus in the predawn sky.

June 14 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon or Rose Moon.

June 16 – Mercury is at greatest western elongation in the predawn sky.

June 18 – The Moon passes south of Saturn after midnight.

June 20 – The Moon passes south of Neptune after midnight.

June 20 – Last Quarter Moon.

June 21 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 5:14 am.

June 21 – The Moon passes south of Jupiter in the predawn sky.

June 22 – The Moon passes south of Mars in the predawn sky.

June 24 – The Moon passes south of Uranus in the predawn sky.

June 26 – The Moon passes north of Venus in the predawn sky.

June 27 – The Moon passes north of Mercury in the predawn sky.

June 28 – New Moon.

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

Binocular Highlights: The Moon, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13

Telescope Highlights: The Moon, 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!