

The Night Sky

Venus-Saturn Conjunction Leads-Off the Month

On May 1st, the brightest planet in the sky, Venus, comes to within 4 degrees of the ringed-planet Saturn. Venus is very much brighter than Saturn, but both should be easily viewable in the morning twilight.

Jupiter is in its final stages of its evening apparition, hanging low above the west-northwestern horizon one hour after sunset. Jupiter reaches conjunction with the Sun late in June.

Mars is still easily visible in the evening sky located high in the sky in the constellation of Cancer in the evening. The nearly first-quarter Moon has a close encounter with Mars on the evening of May 3rd, with Mars hanging due south of the Moon. On the following two nights, Mars skirts the northern edge of the Beehive Cluster (M44). Binoculars will help you spot the stellar members of this open star cluster.

The Moon will reach full phase on May 12th at 12:56 p.m. EDT. The May full Moon is often called the Full Flower Moon since many different types of flowers start blooming during this month.

The ETSU Powell Observatory open houses and the monthly planetarium shows are on hiatus until September. Later this summer, the 2025-2026 schedule for our Astronomy open houses can be found on the web at <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/physics/observatory/starparty.php>, and planetarium shows posted at <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/physics/outreach/planetarium.php>.

This month's Night Sky was written by Dr. Donald G. Luttermoser, Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at ETSU. He can be reached at lutter@etsu.edu. Any students wishing to pursue a career in Physics or Astronomy are encouraged to contact him at this email address. Astronomy-related information for the public, including a link to the ETSU Powell Observatory, can be found at <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/physics/> by selecting the Public Outreach pull down menu on the lower-left side of this web page.