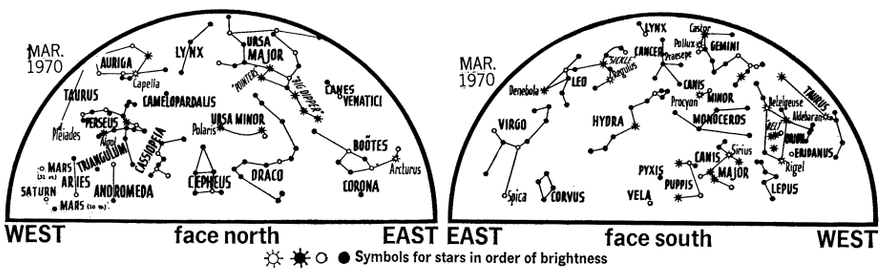


# Four Planets Shine

by James Stokley

Although four naked-eye planets will appear in the March evening skies, they will not be visible simultaneously.

Brightest is Venus. It will appear very low in the west for about an hour after sunset. Higher in the west and considerably fainter is Saturn, in the constellation of Aries. It sets at about 10:30 p.m. on March 1 and 8:30 p.m. on the 31st. Its position is shown on the accompanying maps. These depict the sky as it looks about 10:00 p.m., local standard time, at the beginning of the month, 9 p.m. in the middle and 8 p.m. at the end.

Mars also is visible and is even fainter than Saturn, which it passes on the 17th. Before that date it sets earlier than Saturn and afterward it sets later. The map of the northern sky shows its position on the 10th and 31st. The fourth evening planet is Jupiter, second only to Venus in brightness. It rises in the east at about the time Saturn sets in the west.

The brightest star—almost as bright as Jupiter—is Sirius. It is in the southwest in Canis Major. Higher, and toward the right, stands Orion. Betelgeuse and Rigel are its brightest stars and between them is Orion's belt, a row of three fainter stars. Directly west and still higher is Taurus. Aldebaran is the conspicuous star in this constellation.

**Above Canis Major** is the faint constellation of Monoceros. And above that is Canis Minor, in which Procyon stands. Still higher is Gemini, with Pollux and Castor.

To the right of Taurus (shown on the northern sky map) is Auriga with bright Capella.

Toward the southeast is Leo. Below it shines Virgo with first magnitude Spica near the horizon. Part of Virgo, including the region where Jupiter stands, is below the horizon.

To the left of Virgo (northern map) is Bootes with Arcturus. Higher and to the left is the familiar Big Dipper, part of Ursa Major, with the two pointer stars in its bowl that indicate the direction of Polaris. □

## CELESTIAL TIMETABLE

| March | EST | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7:30 p.m. | Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum brightness |
| 6 | 5:00 a.m. | Moon nearest, distance 223,600 miles |
| 7 | 12:43 p.m. | New moon; eclipse of sun visible in U.S., Canada and Central America (see facing page) |
| 10 | 8:00 p.m. | Moon passes north of Mars |
| 11 | 3:00 a.m. | Moon passes north of Saturn |
| 14 | 4:16 p.m. | Moon in first quarter |
| 17 | 3:00 a.m. | Mars passes north of Saturn |
| 18 | 7:00 a.m. | Moon farthest, distance 251,900 miles |
| 20 | 4:00 a.m. | Moon passes north of Regulus |
| | 7:57 p.m. | Sun over equator, spring begins in Northern Hemisphere |
| 21 | 12:20 a.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 22 | 8:53 p.m. | Full moon |
| 23 | 10:00 a.m. | Mercury behind sun |
| | 9:10 p.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 25 | 2:00 p.m. | Moon passes south of Jupiter |
| 26 | 6:00 p.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 30 | 6:05 a.m. | Moon in last quarter |