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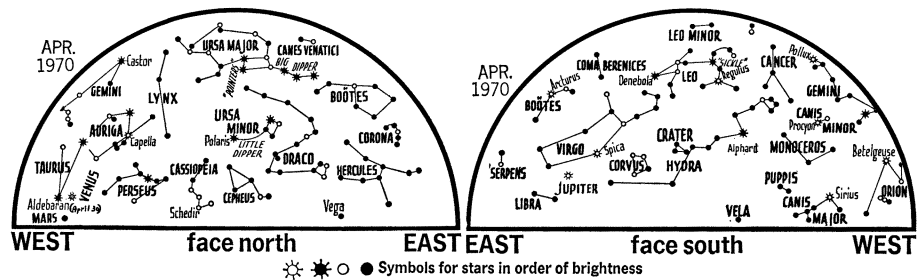
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ASTRONOMY



Venus, Mercury prominent

by James Stokley

While 10 of the brightest stars in the sky appear on our maps for April evenings, four are greatly dimmed because they are close to the horizon. This is because of the increased absorption of their light by the atmosphere when they are in such a position.

The three planets also visible are similarly dimmed. Two of them, however—Venus in the west and Jupiter in the east—are so bright that they will still be prominent. And around the middle of the month seldom seen Mercury also will be visible in the west, near Venus.

The maps show the sky as it appears about 10 p.m., local standard time, on April 1; 9 p.m. on the 15th, and 9 p.m., daylight saving time, on the 30th.

At the beginning of the month Venus is low in the west at dusk, setting about an hour and a half after the sun. It is visible long before any stars appear. At the end of the month it sets two hours after the sun. (The northern sky map shows its position at that time.)

On April 1 Jupiter rises in the east as Venus sets. Later in the month both planets will be in the sky for a while

at the same time. Jupiter is about a third as bright as Venus.

Mercury, innermost planet, is not visible most of the time because it never gets far away from the sun in the sky. On April 18, however, when it is farthest east of the sun, it will be above the horizon for nearly two hours after sunset. It will be most conspicuous from about the 9th to the 20th, standing to the right of Venus, which will be considerably brighter.

Mars also will be in the same part of the sky during April. Because of its present great distance from earth, as well as its low altitude, it is not very prominent.

Low in the southwest is Sirius, part of Canis Major. Above Sirius is Canis Minor, with Procyon. To the right is Orion, with Betelgeuse the brightest star. And farther right, shown on the northern sky map, is Taurus, with Aldebaran, to the left of Venus and many times fainter.

Jupiter, in the southeast, is in Virgo, which also contains the star called Spica. Although it ranks in the first magnitude, it is less than one-twentieth as bright as Jupiter. □

CELESTIAL TIMETABLE

April	EST	
3	6:00 a.m.	Moon nearest, distance 226,800 miles
5	11:09 p.m.	New moon
7	4:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Mercury
	11:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Venus
8	6:00 p.m.	Moon passes north of Mars
13	10:44 a.m.	Moon in first quarter
15	1:00 a.m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,300 miles
16	11:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Regulus
18	3:00 a.m.	Mercury farthest east of sun; visible for a few days around this date low in west after sunset.
21	10:00 a.m.	Jupiter opposite sun
	11:21 a.m.	Full moon
	3:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Jupiter
	EDT	
28	1:18 p.m.	Moon in last quarter
29	midnight	Moon nearest; distance 229,600 miles.