

* * * • SYMBOLS FOR STARS IN ORDER OF BRIGHTNESS

Three Bright Planets Shine in May

To watchers of the evening sky during May the increasing prominence of Venus will be interesting to see.

This planet already is considerably brighter than any other nighttime celestial object except the moon. It appears in the west soon after sunset, while the sky is still quite bright, and week by week it is becoming even more brilliant. At the same time it is drawing away from the sun, so it will remain visible later and later in the evening.

Venus is not the only bright planet of May evenings. Jupiter, higher in the sky and about a sixth as bright, holds second place in brilliance. Venus, moving rapidly across the sky, is approaching Jupiter and will pass it June 8. And still a third planet is also on view: ruddy-hued Mars in the south, about half as bright as Jupiter.

The accompanying maps show the evening skies of May, as they appear about 11:00 p.m., your own kind of daylight saving time (or 10:00 p.m., standard time) on the first of the month. They will look about the same in mid-May an hour earlier, and at the end of the month two hours earlier.

Venus, because of its rapid motion,

is represented by a line through the constellations of Taurus, the bull, and Gemini, the twins. Three of the symbols for very bright objects show its positions on May 1, 15 and 31.

Jupiter is in Cancer, the crab. Mars is in Virgo, the virgin, near the bright start Spica, which is about a sixth as bright. The planet shines with a steady glow, unlike the twinkling of the star.

Spica is one of nine bright stars shown on our maps. All are of the first magnitude in the astronomical scale of stellar brightness. Two, however, are so low that atmospheric absorption dims them considerably. Thus, they are represented by the symbols for fainter stars. One of these is Antares, in the southeast in Scorpius, the scorpion. The other, in the northeast, is Deneb, in Cygnus, the swan.

The other bright stars are more easily seen. Vega, in the northeast, is in Lyra, the lyre. In the south, just above the left end of Virgo is Bootes, the herdsman, with bright Arcturus. To the right of Virgo stands Leo, the lion. Regulus, its brightest star, marks the end of the handle of a little group called the Sickle.

Three more bright stars are in the

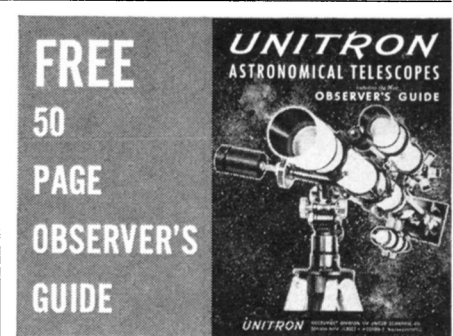
west. To the left of Venus, in Canis Minor, the lesser dog, stands Procyon, and to the right of Venus is Capella, part of Auriga, the charioteer. In Gemini itself, close to where Venus will be at the end of the month, is Pollux. Castor, to the right, represents the other twin.

The large constellation of Ursa Major the great bear, rides high in the north on May evenings. Here we find the Big Dipper, with its two pointers that indicate the direction, lower in the sky, of Polaris, the pole star.

Celestial Timetable for May

| May | EDT | |
|-----|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 6:33 a.m. | Moon in last quarter |
| 5 | Midnight | Moon passes south of Saturn |
| 6 | 7:00 a.m. | Moon farthest, distance 252,300 miles |
| 9 | 10:56 a.m. | New moon (partial eclipse of sun, visible over most of North America) |
| 11 | Noon | Mercury on far side of sun |
| 13 | 3:00 a.m. | Moon passes north of Venus |
| 14 | 8:00 a.m. | Neptune in opposite direction from sun, 2,723 million miles from earth |
| | Midnight | Moon passes north of Jupiter |
| 15 | 5:00 p.m. | Vesta in opposite direction from sun, 94.5 million miles from earth |
| 17 | 1:18 a.m. | Moon in first quarter |
| 20 | Noon | Moon passes north of Mars |
| 21 | 10:00 p.m. | Moon nearest, distance 224,600 miles |
| 23 | 4:23 p.m. | Full moon |
| 30 | 9:52 p.m. | Moon in last quarter. |

Subtract one hour for CDT, two hours from MDT, and three hours for PDT.



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