

Night Sky Viewing at Widener University

April 2020

Sunrise & Sunset Times (EDT)

	Sunrise	Sunset
Begin Month	6:45 am	7:25 pm
End Month	6:03 am	7:54 pm

Lunar Phases



Naked-Eye Planets in the Evening & Morning Sky this Month

Venus (*in Taurus*): This April, magnificent Venus blazes like a yellow beacon high above the western horizon shortly after sunset, and it continues to dominate the evening sky until it sets at around 11:30 pm EDT. Venus reached its greatest evening elongation with the Sun in late March, and as April opens it continues to set at its maximum four hours after the Sun; by the end of the month, it is setting about three and a half hours after sunset. On the 28th, Venus reaches its maximum brilliance. However, Venus's days as an evening showpiece are numbered (at least for 2020); during May, Venus will plunge toward the horizon, so that by the beginning of June it will have all but disappeared from the evening sky. Venus will then swing into the morning sky where it will remain through the end of this year.

Jupiter (*in Sagittarius*): Jupiter is easily spotted resembling a very bright golden star low in the southeast during the pre-dawn hours of April; it rises a little before 3:30 am on the 1st, and by about 1:30 am at month's end. Jupiter lies to the right (west) of nearby Mars and Saturn, and is distinctly brighter than either of them.

Saturn (*in Capricornus*): As April opens, Saturn is rising (together with Mars) in the southeast at about 3:45 am, or about 3 hours before sunrise. By month's end, Saturn has distanced itself from Mars, and is rising at about 2 am, or a full 4 hours before sunrise. Look for Saturn, which resembles a moderately bright yellow star, in the southeastern sky during the pre-dawn hours.

Mars (*in Capricornus*): Mars (together with Saturn) rises in the southeast at approximately 3:45 am in early April. Mars looks like an orange-colored first-magnitude star, slightly brighter than Saturn and distinctly brighter than its "rival" star Antares in Scorpius. The Mars-Saturn pair can easily be located in the southeastern sky during the pre-dawn hours, and they separate noticeably as the month progresses.

Mercury (*in Aquarius-Pisces*): Mercury is extremely low in the east-southeast during dawn this month, and will therefore be difficult to spot against the bright twilight. Mercury rises less than an hour before the Sun as April begins, and that interval gets progressively smaller as the month progresses.

Constellations & Bright Stars Visible Around 9 pm EDT in April

Auriga – high in NW
Bright star *Capella*

Taurus – getting low in WNW
Bright star *Aldebaran*
Star Clusters *Pleiades & Hyades*

Orion – getting low in WSW
Bright stars *Betelgeuse, Rigel*

Gemini – high up in SW, to upper left of Orion
Bright stars *Pollux, Castor*

Canis Major – up in SW, to lower left of Orion
Bright stars *Sirius, Adhara*

Canis Minor – in SSW, below Gemini
Bright star *Procyon*

Leo – high in S
Bright star *Regulus*

Ursa Major – high in NNE
Asterism *Big Dipper*, w/ pointer stars *Merak, Dubhe*;
handle stars *Alioth, Mizar (& Alcor), Alkaid*

Hydra – getting higher in SE
Bright star *Alphard* ("the Solitary One"), lower R of *Regulus*

Boötes – high in NE, near handle of *Big Dipper*
Bright star *Arcturus*

Virgo – rising in ESE
Bright star *Spica*

For more information on the night sky, visit the Widener Observatory Stargazing website at www.widener.edu/stargazing/.
A set of free sky maps can be obtained at www.skymaps.com/.