



STARRY TRAILS

JUNE 2026

Watching the two brightest planets during June will be such a treat! They will be eight degrees apart on June 1, with Jupiter above Venus. Then side by side on June 7. Followed by the close conjunction, with the dazzling duo less than two degrees apart, on June 9 (Illustration 1). Venus is now above Jupiter. Both planets set around 11:30 pm, so there is plenty of time to enjoy the show. Venus will continue to climb higher while Jupiter continues to drop lower and fade in evening twilight by month's end. Other highlights for the brilliant planets include the slender crescent Moon joining the pair on June 16 and June 17 (Illustration 2) and Jupiter forming a straight line with the bright stars Castor and Pollux on June 24.

Also, we celebrate the Summer Solstice on June 21!

With the long days of summer, our Starry hike will not start until 10:00pm. So, grab your Starry Trail Map, binoculars, bug spray and a light jacket. Take a few minutes to enjoy firefly's twinkling! Our hike begins in the west or where you see the beautiful sunset colors. Trek up and you will see the bright star, Regulus, which is part of the constellation Leo, the Lion. Down and to the right are two stars that look almost identical, Gemini, the Twins. To the left you will find the star Procyon (Illustration 3).

Turn to the right or direction north and you will see the Big Dipper, high in the sky. Take the two stars at the end of the cup and draw an imaginary line to the next bright star. You have reached the North Star! The North Star, or Polaris, is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. Queen Cassiopeia, the w-shape, is very low in the north (Illustration 4).

Hike back to the Big Dipper. Arc off the handle to the orange-yellow star, Arcturus. Turn to the right or east. Continue to look high overhead. Slightly down and to the left, of Arcturus, you will come upon a semi-circle of stars. It looks almost like a necklace, but actually it is the Northern Crown or Corona Borealis. I think it looks like a smiley face! Hike down and to the left from Corona Borealis. There you will see a keystone shape. This is the body of Hercules, the bravest and strongest hero! Binocular time! Take your binoculars and scan around the part of Hercules facing Corona. Do you see the fuzzy object? This is the finest Globular Star Cluster (M13) in the northern skies! Look for the bright blue, white star down and to the left of Hercules. This star is Vega, which is a part of the Summer Triangle (Illustration 5).

What a great way to kick off summer! Next month Venus continues to dazzle, summer constellations and the summer Milky Way!

Highlights

June 8 – Last Quarter Moon.

June 9 – **Conjunction of Venus & Jupiter. The two blazing planets will be less than two degrees apart after sunset!**

June 10 – The crescent Moon passes north of Saturn in the predawn sky.

June 12 – The slender crescent Moon passes north of Mars in the predawn sky.

June 14 – New Moon.

June 17 – The slender crescent Moon passes north of Venus & Jupiter after sunset.

June 21 – The longest day of the year! Summer solstice occurs at 4:25 am.

June 21 – First Quarter Moon.

June 29 – Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Strawberry Moon or Rose Moon.

West - Castor, Pollux, Regulus. **Overhead** – Arcturus. **South** – Spica. **East** – Vega. **Southeast** – Antares.

Binocular Highlights: The Moon, Venus, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13

Telescope Highlights: The Moon, Venus, Mars, M51, M13, M57, M3, M81, M82, M10, M12, M92, M94.

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Night Sky Illustrations created by Suzie Dills using Starry Night Backyard & Stellarium.

Illustrations courtesy of Cassandra Dills.