

Text for Tonight's Sky June 2010

Your guide to constellations, deep-sky objects, planets and events.

Tonight's Sky, highlights of the June sky.

JUNE CONSTELLATIONS:

The coming of summer is heralded by the majestic rise of the Milky Way above the southern horizon.

High overhead lies Bootes, the herdsman.

This pattern of stars has been known to many ancient cultures.

Its prominent kite shape makes it easy to find.

Arcturus is the fourth brightest star in the sky.

Just to the left of Bootes lies the Northern Crown, Corona Borealis.

This lovely circlet of stars was the wedding crown of Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos of Crete.

While the stars are not very bright, their pattern is easy to see.

Lying just below Bootes and the Corona Borealis is the head of the serpent, who in Greek mythology revealed the secrets of healing the sick.

JUNE DEEP SKY OBJECTS:

A lovely collection of hundreds of thousands of old stars, globular-cluster M-5 is visible to the unaided eye when the sky is dark and clear.

Find it opposite the serpent's head.

It is spectacular through a pair of binoculars.

JUNE PLANETS:

Venus, Mars, and Saturn line up beautifully as they begin to set, one after the other, into the western horizon after sunset.

Awaken early, before sunrise, to witness Jupiter blazing in the pre-dawn southeastern sky.

JUNE EVENTS:

On the 26th, the upper half of the Moon will slip into the outer edge of Earth's shadow.

It will appear to have a reddish tint.

Eastern Asia, Australia, and the western Americas will have the best view.

Days appear to get longer from the winter solstice, through the vernal equinox, to the summer solstice.

The summer solstice, the longest day of the year, heralds the beginning of summer.

The Sun reaches its northernmost and highest position in the sky on June 21st.

These changes are due to the tilt of Earth's axis as it travels around the Sun.

CREDITS:

Starfield images created with SkyChart III software by Southern Star System

Mythological constellation forms from the *Uranographicarum* by Johannes Hevelius, courtesy United States Naval Observatory

Messier 5 (NGC 5904) in Serpens image courtesy of William C. Keel, University of Alabama

Venus image courtesy of Michael Meyers

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