

Text for Tonight's Sky July 2010

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

Tonight's Sky, highlights of the July sky.

JULY CONSTELLATIONS:

The Milky Way fills the summer night sky with a treasure chest of bright jewels.

Scorpius is a striking constellation, one of the few that resembles the object after which it is named.

The Scorpion is easy to trace in the sky.

Its head, curved tail and venomous stinger are prominent.

At the Scorpion's heart lies a reddish star.

Its color closely resembles that of Mars, known to the Greeks as Ares.

Ancient Greek stargazers, contemplating these two crimson objects, named the star Antares, which means, "rival of Ares."

The mythical strongman, Hercules, is found high in the summer night sky, wielding his mighty weapons.

The constellation is rather dim.

Find it by locating the lopsided square of four stars called the Keystone.

JULY DEEP SKY OBJECTS:

The Keystone in Hercules is the "key" to finding one of the brightest globular- clusters in the summer night sky.

The wonderful Hercules Cluster, also known as M-13, contains about a million stars.

Globular-clusters are collections of hundreds of thousands of closely packed, gravitationally bound stars.

Another prominent globular-cluster, M-4, lies just to the right of Antares in Scorpius.

Our Milky Way contains about 150 of these ancient clusters, which were created before our galaxy began to form its spiral shape.

JULY PLANETS:

A special treat awaits skywatchers this month at sunset.

Saturn, Mars, and Venus follow Mercury as they all set into the western horizon.

Watch them as they come closer together each night.

Jupiter rises after midnight to grace the night sky.

JULY EVENTS:

South Pacific islanders will enjoy a total solar eclipse on July 11th as the Moon's shadow passes over the southern parts of the Pacific Ocean.

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

M4 image courtesy of AURA/NOAO/NSF

M13 image courtesy of Robert Gendler Venus image courtesy of Michael Meyers

Narration: Nancy Calo

Music: John Serrie

Production: Lucy Albert, John Godfrey, Stratis Kakadelis, Bryan Preston, Stephanie Smith, Vanessa Thomas and the Space Telescope Science Institute