

# Perseids meteor shower show

Are you looking for free entertainment? Save those dollars and break out the lawn chairs Friday after sunset for the annual Perseids Meteor shower, which peaks by the next day.

The celestial show has been observed for about 2,000 years with the earliest information coming from the Far East.

Some Catholics refer to the Perseids as the "tears of St. Lawrence," since Aug. 10 is the date of his martyrdom. In 2009, the estimated peak Zenithal Hourly Rate was 173, but fainter meteors were washed out by a waning gibbous moon.

This year has a similar set back as Saturday is a full moon and its light will block quite a few streaks.

However, the next two years after that promise to be darker.

The cosmic event is the result of comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle



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The Sky's the Limit

trailing debris. It was last observed in 1992 but is not supposed to return until 2126, so don't hold your breath.

Unlike other showers, this one is such a bonus, not only because it happens in the summer, but also because it requires no equipment like telescopes or astronomical apparatus. Just look heavenward and enjoy the display with some warm bevies and friends.

## Sky watch for the next month

A full moon rises on Saturday at sunset and is out all night until dawn. While it's

usually a welcome site, unfortunately it's a hindrance during the meteor shower.

The blue planet Neptune will be rising and visible with a scope or a good pair of binoculars on Thursday after sundown in the southeast-east and setting in the southwest by dawn.

This is an excellent month to view our home galaxy, the Milky Way, without freezing. The best time is after 11 p.m. until dawn.

The peak of the annual Perseids meteor shower starts Friday and continues Saturday with an estimated rate of about 50 meteors per hour. Best viewing starts at 11 p.m. facing the northeast in the constellation of Perseus ([www.skymaps.com](http://www.skymaps.com) has free star charts that will help you find it) until dawn. For further information check out <http://www.chiff.com/science/perseids.htm>,

which has a complete video guide.

## Public events for the next month

Have you ever wanted to sleep under the stars right near home?

Bring your own bedding Saturday after supper time. Gazing starts late at night with astrophotography, weather permitting. Treats and refreshments are provided free of charge. All are welcome. For further information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994 or visit the website [www.vulcantourism.com](http://www.vulcantourism.com).

Happy meteor shower viewing and keep reaching for the sky!

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