

# Love is in the sky

Can you be a romantic on a moonless night?

Whether you have a scope or not, a dark night can be a great opportunity to show off the sky on the day dedicated to lovers.

The Valentine Star, better known as Betelgeuse, is an easy find. The constellation of Orion is a prominent winter object and his armpit is where you'll find this.

Reputed as being on the verge of going super nova, we have no idea when the grand day is, so we might be the last generation that'll enjoy this celestial sight.

The Heart Nebula, IC 1805, on the other hand is much more stable but requires a good scope. At 7,500 light years away from earth, it's located in the Perseus arm of the galaxy in the constellation Cassiopeia. This is an emission nebula of glowing red gas



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The Sky's the Limit

and darker dust lanes. Its brightest part is the knot at the right. Lastly, with that same scope, try and find the recent heart-shaped landscape on Pluto. You're a total genius if you're successful, considering it took a century and spacecraft for NASA to even discover it was there.

## Sky watch

Look southeast on Saturday, Feb. 6, before sunrise, as the thin crescent moon is surrounded by Venus, Pluto and Mercury while Saturn and Mars are

45 degrees up towards the south.

The Valentine's star is visible on Valentine's Day, Sunday, Feb. 14, starting in the southeast sky from dusk until it sets in the west after 3 a.m.

The Zodiacal Light is difficult to find, but the best time is from Wednesday, Feb. 24 for two weeks in the northwest at night. The Zodiacal Light is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac.

At sunrise on Sunday, Feb. 28, you can spot Neptune using a solar filter (never do this without the proper protection) rising just below the sun.

## Public events

Join us on Friday, Feb. 12 and learn about Betelgeuse and more, courtesy of the Royal Astronomical

Society of Canada (Calgary chapter) starting at 7:30 p.m.

All are welcome to this free event.

A brief indoor presentation will be followed, weather permitting, by stargazing with an 11-inch telescope and binoculars outside.

On the second Friday of each month, experts are on hand to explain the heavens, teach telescoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky.

For further information, phone Vulcan Tourism at 403-485-2994 or go to the website [www.vulcantourism.com](http://www.vulcantourism.com).

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