

Astronomy in the Two Dales

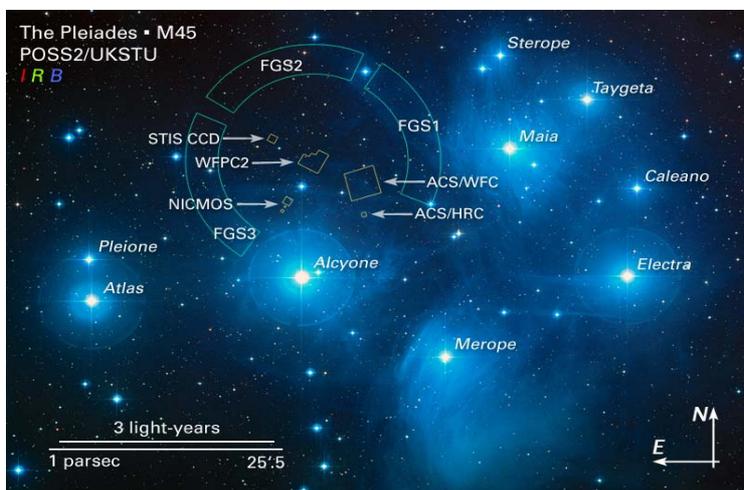
November

Fizz , bang , crackle , what celestial fireworks do we have for the month of November? Well , how about two meteor showers , the Taurids and the Leonids.

The Taurids are a long running meteor shower that peaks this year on November the 5th , however the moons light will block all but the brightest meteors and I surmise the rockets and flares will do for the rest , however for those of us who may be up and about at 2am on the 6th the constellation Taurus will be in the southern sky with the meteors radiating from that point.



As part of the constellation of Taurus we have The Seven Sisters or Pleiades , an open cluster of stars and the red giant star Aldebaran which is only 65 light years from Earth and there are scientific reports that Aldebaran has a planet orbiting it . For those of you with dreams of immortality , Pioneer 10 , a probe launched back in the seventies will reach this area of space in two million years time , so stay tuned for the news on that one.





Our second light show occurs on the 17th to the 18th of the month and as the new moon occurs on the 11th the skies will be dark for the Leonid meteor shower. Radiating from the constellation Leo, this meteor shower has a cycle that peaks every 33 years, the next one is in 2034 when hundreds of meteors can be seen every hour. Another date for your diary. If you have ever wondered what a meteor shower looks like from an astronaut's point of view, here is a picture taken in 1997 of the Leonid meteor shower.



The full moon occurs on the 25th, and the only time for planetary observation is in the early morning as Venus, Mars and Jupiter dance with each other in the eastern sky after 2am before the sun rises, so load up on parkin, wrap up warmly and enjoy the show.

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