

M81 and M82: The view from Glentrool

Messier 81 (Bode's Galaxy) is a spiral galaxy about 12 million light-years away, with a diameter of 90,000 light years, in the constellation Ursa Major. Due to its proximity to our galaxy, large size, and active galactic nucleus, M81 has been studied extensively by professional astronomers, but us earthbound amateurs can look at it as well!

M82 (The Cigar Galaxy) is an irregular galaxy which is gravitationally bound to M81 so the pair are often imaged together as seen below in this image from Hunter MCall, taken from Glentrool on 1st April. Hunter was using his Atik Infinity camera with his 80mm Altair Astro Apo refractor as shown in Newsletter #42 in February. The image capture time was about half an hour for both this one and the image of Messier 13 on page 2.



Telescope Loan Scheme

We are happy to lend telescopes to members who want to get some practical observation experience. We currently have three telescopes out on loan, in Leswalt, Stranraer and Gatehouse of Fleet. Just email if you fancy one!

Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

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M13 Globular Cluster

Here is Hunter McCall's image of M13, taken from Glentworth on April 1st. M13, The Hercules Globular Cluster was described by Edmund Halley in 1714 and added to the Charles Messier catalogue of "things not to be confused with comets" in 1764.

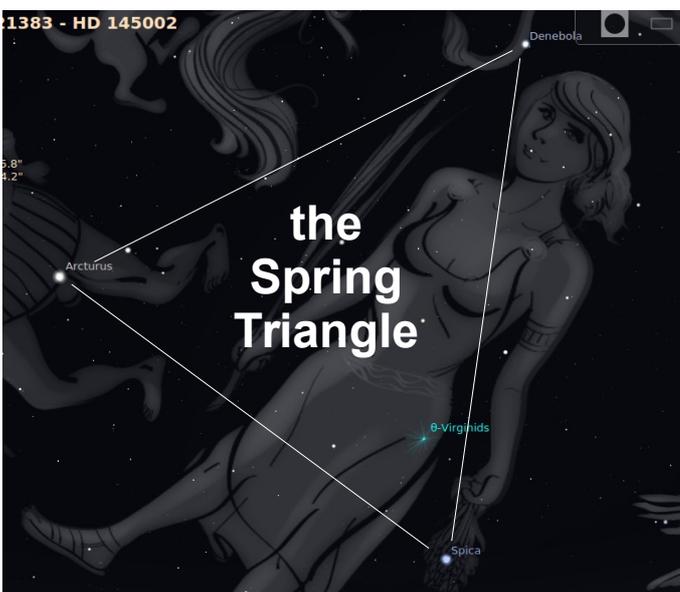
About 145 light-years in diameter, M13 is composed of several hundred thousand stars, the brightest of which is a red giant, the variable star V11, also known as V1554 Herculis, with an apparent visual magnitude of 11.95. M13 is 22,200–25,000 light-years away from Earth.

About one third of the way from Vega to Arcturus, M13 can be visible to the naked eye depending on circumstances during spring and summer.



GFAS Membership

We always welcome new members, especially juniors who join for free, and our two-years-for-the-price-of-one subscription offer still holds, so if you join now you won't pay again until October 2022! Subs remain at £15.00 Adult, £25.00 Family, £0.00 Junior. Just email for an application form!



Things to watch for in April

All month - the Spring Triangle - Arcturus, Denebola and Spica - in the SE after sunset, in the constellations Boötes, Leo and Virgo.

April 10, 11 12, around new moon: Whirlpool and Pinwheel galaxies, both in Ursa Major.

Mid-April onwards: Venus climbs away from the sun. Venus' brilliant -3.9 magnitude will allow her to be seen in the post-sunset twilight after about mid-April. In a telescope, Venus will show a diameter of 9.8 arc-seconds, and a nearly full disk.

April 17th - Crescent moon near M35 (the Shoebuckle Cluster). Visible in binoculars.

Lyrids Meteor Shower - 22nd April - rising after 9:00 pm, peaking around midnight.

Full Moon - 27th April the "Pink Moon" -it's not actually pink, but there should be lots of pink flowers about?

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