



Evening sky in July 2017

Overhead the constellation of Scorpius dominates the winter night sky. The bright star Antares is the “heart” of the Scorpion. This red supergiant is 883 times the diameter of the Sun, one of the largest known stars, about 550 light years away from Earth. From Antares a line of stars runs along the scorpion’s “body” and ends in two stars that represent the sting. Another pair of bright stars, the Pointers, lie a little to the south. They “point” to the top of the Southern Cross (Crux). The False Cross is lower down to the south-western horizon. To the north are three bright stars in their respective constellations: Arcturus in Boötes (Herdsman), Altair in Aquila (Eagle) and Vega in Lyra (Lyre – a musical instrument). The irregular kite shape of Corvus (Crow) can be found halfway up from the western horizon and slightly to its north is the bright star, Spica, the “hip” of the Maiden (Virgo).

Planet Mercury is putting on its best display of the year. It can be seen low in the west and by the middle of the month it sets after twilight in Leo (Lion). Planet Jupiter is in Virgo and planet Saturn is in Ophiuchus (Serpent Bearer).

The Moon is on the evening sky until 12 July and again from 24 July.