

Our Night Sky for February 12th 2024

Last week I suggested a look for bright stars because the moon would wash out most faint objects. Tonight, the moon sets at about nine forty and the constellation Orion is well situated about mid way up from due south. First locate the bright upper left star “Betelgeuse” and an even brighter star at the lower right “Rigel” a blue, white super giant.

Mid way between these corner stars you can find the three horizontal belt stars. You can easily find brightness details and names for these belt stars with a google search for a sky map of Orion. But what I would like to point you at is a much more impressive sight If you have any kind of binoculars, they will help you enjoy what we will look at next. Starting at the left-hand belt star look down about the same distance as the width of the belt. Down below the left-hand belt star you should be able to catch a very faint wispy glow. This is the Orion nebula, if the sky is clear and with the moon below the horizon even with your naked eye you should be able to see a slight blurring or wispieness. Again, do a search for photos of the Orion nebula. This is the most accessible star forming region for small equipment and is a beautiful example of the gas and dust that eventually coalesce into stars in Our Night Sky.