

Our Night Sky for September 30th, 2024

This week you have an opportunity to view almost all the planets in our solar system in a moonless sky. Mars is the planet that rises later than the rest but if you wait until closer to midnight later in the week Mars makes it's appearance very low in the southeast. Look to your right almost due east Jupiter is easy to spot well above the horizon. Continue looking further south. About the same distance above the horizon due south is majestic Saturn. Uranus and Neptune are also well place near the planets you've already spotted but you will need a friend with a good pair of binoculars.

Remember that for the last several months the planets were all in our sky but close to the position of the sun. The outer planets are slow to change position in the sky so they are all still fairly close to each other but that part of our sky is slowly trailing the sun and moving into our evening sky. It's not often the planets share the same sky. One example was forty years ago when the outer planets were aligned to allow the flight of the spacecraft Voyager to visit the outer planets in a sequence. This voyage allowed photos to reach us that otherwise would have cost billions more for several separate spacecraft. The wonders revealed and the questions still to be researched have fueled years of public interest in Our Night Sky.