

Our Night Sky for October 19th, 2026

We have all become accustomed to Saturn, about halfway up in our eastern sky. As fall proceeds it is slowly drifting south and in a couple of weeks it will reach south and set in the west earlier each evening. I usually don't suggest the gas giants as a target for easy viewing but tonight may be different. At about mid-evening you can spot Saturn where it usually is, mid way up the southeastern sky but tonight it is joined fairly closely by Neptune. If you look a little right of Saturn, you should be able to spot a blue fairly bright disk. This is the gas giant Neptune; it is a planet far enough away to still be somewhat mysterious. So far, it has not been visited by one of the years long orbiting spacecraft like Jupiter and Saturn, but there will be some science missions in the near future.

In a few days there is another evening to remember. There has already been a minor meteor shower earlier this month, but October has two. The night of 20th, the morning of the 21st, we will have up to 20 meteors an hour. It is called Orionids because the radiant is the constellation of Orion which is just establishing itself on the eastern horizon and is recognizable closer to midnight. The waxing moon will interfere somewhat, but it sets at about 2 am if you are up at that time. The next couple of meteor showers are in much colder weather, This meteor shower is debris from comet Halley and enters our atmosphere at high speed so this is usually a good show to enjoy Our Night Sky