



Liverpool Astronomical Society

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Press Release August 2010
Embargo until Midnight July 30th 2010

Shooting Stars for Summer Nights

August 11th 12th and 13th, 2010 Perseids



And when we say August 12 or 13, we mean the morning hours after midnight ... not that night. These typically fast and bright meteors radiate from a point in the constellation Perseus the Hero. But you don't need to know Perseus to watch the shower. The meteors appear in all parts of the sky. The Perseids are considered by many people to be the year's best shower, and often peak at 50 or more meteors per hour. 2010 is a great year for the Perseids. This year, the slender waxing crescent moon will set at early evening, leaving a dark sky for this year's Perseid show. The Perseids tend to strengthen in number as late night deepens into midnight, and typically produce the most meteors in the wee hours before dawn. *These meteors are often*

bright and frequently leave persistent trains. On the mornings of August 12 and 13, watch the Perseid meteors streak across this short summer night from midnight until dawn. Lie back and watch meteors until dawn's light washes the stars and planets from the sky. The morning of August 11 should be good, too – in fact, this shower tends to rise gradually to a peak for about a week. Then it's known to drop off rapidly after the peak mornings.

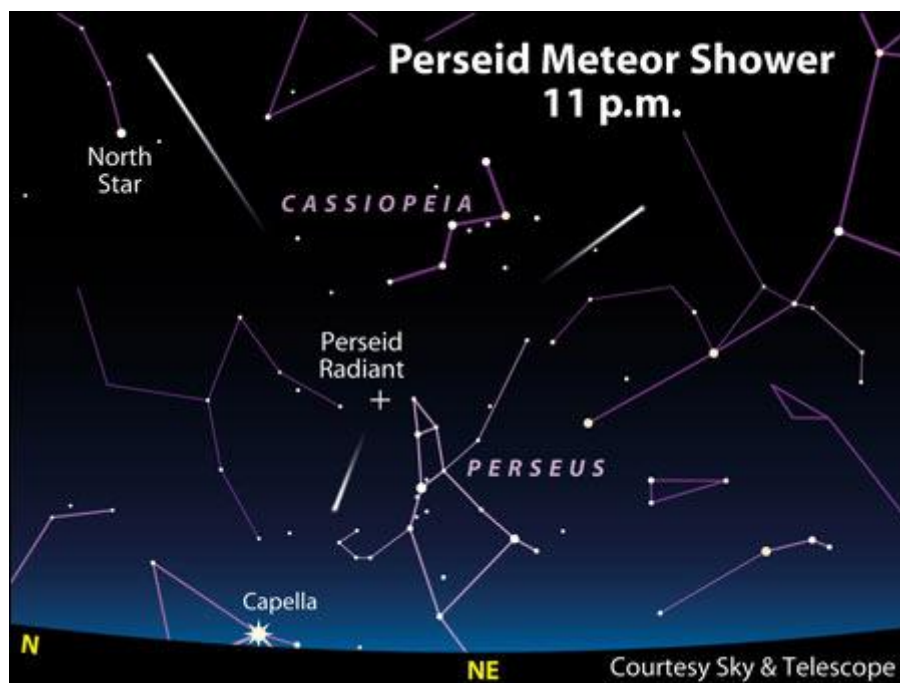
Members of Liverpool Astronomical Society will be holding a special public observation night for the Perseid meteor shower on Wednesday August 11th from 7pm, with dusk at about 9pm, at the Society's Leighton Observatory, Pex Hill, Cronton, Widnes. The event is free, and there is limited car parking nearby. Please prepare to wrap up warmly as even summer nights can be cold, and let's hope the rain and clouds stay away.

More details from Mr Brendan Martin, LAS Observatory director

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Notes for Editors & Producers

The Perseids is the name of a prolific meteor shower associated with the comet Swift-Tuttle. The Perseids are so-called because the point they appear to come from, called the radiant, lies in the constellation Perseus. The name derives in part from the word Perseides (Περσείδες), a term found in Greek mythology referring to the descendants of Perseus. The stream of debris is called the Perseid cloud and stretches along the orbit of the comet Swift-Tuttle. The cloud consists of particles ejected by the comet as it travels on its 130-year orbit. Most of the dust in the cloud today is around a thousand years old. However, there is also a relatively young filament of dust in the stream that was pulled off the comet in 1862. The rate of meteors originating from this filament is much higher than for the older part of the stream.

The shower is visible from mid-July each year, with the peak in activity being between August 9 and 14, depending on the particular location of the stream. During the peak, the rate of meteors reaches 60 or more per hour. They can be seen all across the sky, but because of the path of Swift-Tuttle's orbit, Perseids are primarily visible in the northern hemisphere. As with all meteor showers, the rate is greatest in the pre-dawn hours, since the side of the Earth nearest to turning into the sun scoops up more meteors as the Earth moves through space. However you may need to travel to dark sky sites away from town and city lights to see fainter meteors.

The Perseids active during 2010 (July 23rd – August 24th)

Peak of Active is August 12th/13th with

Predicted rates of about 145 meteors seen per hour

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Liverpool Astronomical Society ~ over 125 years of Astronomy on Merseyside