

# Can we solve the growing problem of light pollution?

A June 2018 [www.naturalnews.com](http://www.naturalnews.com) article called *"Light pollution is a growing problem: What you can do?"* discusses a century old phenomenon plaguing the developed worlds.

For thousands of years, we managed with candles, fires and lanterns. However, since the early 1900s, light pollution has grown exponentially to affect 66 per cent of the population. Maps show Europe practically has no dark skies left, much like Japan and eastern North America.

We in Western Canada are comparatively lucky, and most of the geographic world is still dark at night like the ancients experienced.

According to [www.space.com](http://www.space.com) columnist Joe Rao, the harmful effects of light pollution is not just on casual stargazing but "22,000 Gigawatt hours (\$2.2 billion)" of electricity annually are wasted due to poorly designed streetlamps.



**Neel Roberts**

---

The Sky's the Limit

Negative effects on wildlife, according to a report from City-Lab.com, include lights on skyscrapers, airports, and stadiums attracting birds into urban areas, where they smack into walls, windows, each other, or flap around eventually perishing from exhaustion-related complications."

For humans, it upsets our internal clock, leading up to and including cancer. Rao points to solutions of proper shielding that direct all light downwards. He also suggests switching to

"warm white LEDs" with minimal blue emissions and avoid using extra lights altogether. The less LED lights there are around, the better. I've had my farm lights off for 20 years and I love it! An excellent free documentary I've recommended for years is PBS's "The City Dark." Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGyFsMCsQNE> to watch it.

## Skywatch

On Friday, Sept. 21 at sunset, look southwest at about 7:30 p.m. to catch Venus before it sets at 8 p.m. If you have a good binoculars, you can actually see it cresting like the moon!

On Monday, Sept. 24, look east at 7:40 p.m. for a spectacular upsurge in the moon, which will seem huge.

On Saturday, Sept. 22 at 7:54 p.m., the summer's officially over.

From Wednesday, Sept. 5 for two weeks in the east morning twilight is the best time to see

the Zodiacal Light, which is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac.

## Public events

Mark down Friday, September 15 from 7:30-10:30 p.m. for the "Universe in the Waves" event at the Rothney Observatory near Priddis. Jeroen Stil and Wesley Ernst of the University of Calgary's Department of Physics and Astronomy will speak, and astronomers will be on hand to answer questions. The entrance fee \$30 per car. For further information, contact Jennifer Howse at [jhowse@phas.ucalgary.ca](mailto:jhowse@phas.ucalgary.ca) or 403-931-2366. The website [www.ucalgary.ca/rao](http://www.ucalgary.ca/rao) is updated regularly.

*Neel Roberts, a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574.*