

Jupiter and Saturn conjunction solstice a special pre- Christmas treat



NEEL ROBERTS
Sky's the Limit

This Christmas season is going to offer a special treat for shoppers coming home the night of the winter solstice.

On Monday, Dec. 21 after sunset you will be able to catch a rare conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter.

SKY WATCH

On Sunday, Dec. 10 at dusk, look south-southwest before 4:30 p.m. and watch Venus and a crescent moon set into the horizon.

On Thursday, Dec. 17 at dusk, look south-southwest at sunset and watch a crescent moon, Jupiter and Saturn set into the night sky.

We have two mild meteor showers this month. The Geminid peaks the night of Dec. 13-14 just after midnight in the constellation of Gemini. The Ursid shower peaks Monday, Dec. 21 before sunrise when the earth moves through the centre of the dust trail left behind by comet 8P/Tuttle. For more on all the meteor showers next year, check out the International Meteor Organization at www.imo.net/calendar/2021.

Monday, Dec. 21 is officially the shortest day of the year with seven hours, 54 minutes and 19 seconds of daylight. This occurs when the sun reaches its most southerly declination of -23.5 degrees and likewise the North Pole is tilted 23.5 degrees away from the sun. The December solstice occurs annually on a day between Dec. 20 and 23. On this date, all places above a latitude of 66.5 degrees north are now in darkness while locations below a latitude of 66.5 degrees south receive 24 hours of daylight.

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