

Summer's best meteor shower

There are several meteor showers in a year, but none compare to the annual August Perseids Meteor Shower. Break out the lawn chairs any time after Thursday, Aug. 9 after sunset for this 2013 summer sensational meteor shower, which peaks by Monday, Aug. 12.

The streaks become obvious once the glowing Double Cluster in Perseus clears the horizon at about 11 p.m. and ascends into the night sky.

Experts predict a great show this year as a fat crescent moon sets as the shower gets going.

Some Roman Catholics refer to the Perseids as the "tears of St. Lawrence", since Aug. 10 is the date of his martyrdom.

Intensity is expected to be 60-80 meteors per hour, usually peaking during pre-dawn hours.



Neel Roberts

The Sky's the Limit

It's a good reason to get up early.

The celestial event is the result of a comet trailing debris. This particular comet has been seen since before Christ and was last observed in 1992, but it is not scheduled to return until 2126, so don't hold your breath.

The Perseids is such a bonus, not only because it happens in the summer but also because it requires no equipment like telescopes or other astronomical apparatus.

Free star charts available at www.skymaps.com will help you find it.

For further information check out <http://www.chiff.com/science/perseids.htm>, which has a complete video guide.

Sky watch for the next month

On Friday, Aug. 9, just after 9 p.m. in the west, the sun is on its way down, followed by the moon and Venus, which stays a bit into nightfall. No binoculars are needed.

On Monday, Aug. 12, while waiting for the meteor shower peak to start, look southwest after 9 p.m. and the bright object above the setting moon is Saturn. Venus is a little further to the west until 10 p.m. If you have a powerful enough telescope, you should be able to capture the rings in daylight if you start at 8 p.m.

Public events for the next month

Mark down Friday,

Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Trek Station for our monthly stargazing. We will try and show you the rings of Saturn during daylight followed by a short indoor presentation on the cosmos (weather pending). Experts are on hand every second Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. to explain the heavens, teach telescoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of the sky. For further information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994 and go to www.vulcantourism.com.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). He welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683 and Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.