

Astronomy

The world's best-selling astronomy magazine brings you a calendar filled with dramatic images of nebulae, spiral galaxies, planets, star-forming regions, and other mysteries of deep space. Each month details planet visibility, meteor showers, conjunctions, and other observing opportunities, as well as moon phases and major astronomical events.



Trumpler 14 Star Cluster



Planetary Nebula Purgathofer-Weinberger 1



Reflection Nebula IC 2631



Spiral Galaxy M96



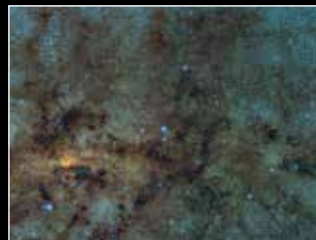
Star-forming Region N159



The Prawn Nebula (IC 4628)



Mars



The Milky Way's Nucleus in Infrared Light



Spiral Galaxy MCG+07-33-027



The Bubble Nebula (NGC 7635)



Star Cluster R136 in the Tarantula Nebula



The Orion Nebula (M42) in Infrared Light

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Star-forming Region N159

ESA/NASA/Hubble

Mercury is visible in morning twilight, early and midmonth. Venus sets at 11 p.m. Mars rises at 1 a.m. Jupiter is visible all night. Saturn rises at 11 p.m., crosses meridian at 4 a.m. (All times are local daylight time for an observer at 40° north latitude at midmonth.)

May

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Ultraviolet radiation pouring from the hot, young stars in this cloud of gas and dust excites its hydrogen atoms into incandescence. Cataloged as N159, the glowing nebula belongs to the Milky Way's biggest satellite galaxy, the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), its brilliant stars also unleash a torrent of charged particles that help sculpt the ridges and filaments seen in the surrounding gas and dust. Intense star formation takes place throughout N159. The nebula spans more than 150 light-years and resides just south of an even larger stellar nursery known as the Tarantula Nebula (see November).

Notice the small, butterfly-shaped gas cloud just above the prominent dust lane located slightly left of center. Astronomers suspect that this so-called Papillon Nebula (papillon is French for "butterfly") shrouds the early stages in the birth of an exceptionally massive star. Thousands of years from now, a star with dozens of times the Sun's mass presumably will burst on the scene here as one of N159's luminaries. The nebula itself should survive for millions of years as it continues to churn out more modest stars.

Although the LMC qualifies as the Milky Way's neighbor, it still lies some 160,000 light-years from Earth. Only the Hubble Space Telescope can view objects at this distance with such clarity. The orbiting observatory captured this image which combines observations at both visible-light and infrared wavelengths, with its Advanced Camera for Surveys.