



Evening sky in JULY 2012

Overhead the constellation of Scorpius dominates the sky and is easily identifiable. The bright star Antares is the heart of the scorpion. This red supergiant is 850 times the diameter of our Sun, 15 times more massive, 10 000 brighter and about 550 light years away from Earth. From Antares a line of stars runs down the scorpion's body and ends with two stars representing the "sting". Look a little to the south to find another pair of very bright stars, the Pointers. They "point" to the top of Crux, the Southern Cross. The False Cross is lower down to the south-western horizon. In the northern sky Arcturus, (in Boötes) Altair (in Aquila) and Vega (in Lyra) are the brightest stars in their respective constellations. The irregular kite shape of Corvus the Crow can be found halfway up from the western horizon. Slightly north is the constellation of Virgo, with the bright star, Spica at her hip.

Planets Mars and Saturn are in Virgo close to Spica. Planet Mercury is in Cancer low in the west just after sunset. Try to spot the planet before it disappears in the glow of the setting sun towards month's end.

The Moon is in the sky until 5 July and again from 20 July.