

Geminid meteor shower to peak on 14th December 2009

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The annual Geminid meteor shower is predicted to peak at 0510 GMT on 14th December. Meteors (or ‘shooting stars’) are the result of small particles entering the Earth’s atmosphere at high speed, heating up and then disintegrating.

The superheated air around them appears as a short-lived streak of light that quickly fades from view.

In this shower the meteors appear to emanate from a point in the constellation of [Gemini](#), hence the name Geminid and are associated with the asteroid Phaethon, suspected to be an extinct comet. This year the peak of the shower is just two days before New Moon, so moonlight will not interfere with our view of the meteors.

Under ideal conditions, with a clear sky and far away from the lights of towns and cities, it may be possible to see more than 100 [meteors](#) each hour which could make the Geminids one of the best astronomical sights of 2009.

Provided by British National Space Centre

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