

Four planets huddle up before dawn next week

May 6 2011



Look east before dawn next week to spy four planets. HD animation and high-resolution graphics available from StarDate Media. The animation is also available on YouTube.

Four of the five planets visible to the unaided eye huddle quite close together in the pre-dawn sky next week, according to the editors of *StarDate* magazine.

On the morning of May 10, Venus and Jupiter will stand side by side, quite low in the east, as dawn brightens. If you have a horizon clear of buildings and trees, they will be easy to spot. They are the brightest objects in the [night sky](#) after the moon. Venus is the brighter of the two. Jupiter is to its left.

Mercury is visible to the lower right of Venus, about the same distance as Venus is to Jupiter. It isn't nearly as bright, but its proximity to Venus

will help you find it. Finally, Mars is about twice as far to the lower left of [Jupiter](#). It's so low and faint that it will be difficult to see, but [binoculars](#) may help.

The planets remain huddled together for several days, changing positions day by day. The best view is from the southern states because the path the [planets](#) follow across the sky (the ecliptic) stands at a little higher angle relative to the horizon.

More information: Published bi-monthly by The University of Texas at Austin McDonald Observatory, [StarDate](#) magazine provides readers with skywatching tips, skymaps, beautiful astronomical photos, astronomy news and features, and a 32-page Sky Almanac each January.

Provided by University of Texas at Austin

Citation: Four planets huddle up before dawn next week (2011, May 6) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-planets-huddle-dawn-week.html>

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