

## A green ring fit for a superhero

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This glowing emerald nebula seen by NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope is reminiscent of the glowing ring wielded by the superhero Green Lantern. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(PhysOrg.com) -- This glowing emerald nebula seen by NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope is reminiscent of the glowing ring wielded by the superhero Green Lantern. In the comic books, the diminutive Guardians of the Planet "Oa" forged his power ring, but astronomers believe rings

like this are actually sculpted by the powerful light of giant "O" stars. O stars are the most massive type of star known to exist.

Named RCW 120 by astronomers, this region of hot gas and glowing dust can be found in the murky clouds encircled by the tail of the constellation Scorpius. The green ring of dust is actually glowing in infrared colors that our eyes cannot see, but show up brightly when viewed by Spitzer's [infrared detectors](#). At the center of this ring are a couple of [giant stars](#) whose intense ultraviolet light carved out the bubble, though they blend in with the other stars when viewed in infrared.

Rings like this are so common in Spitzer's observations that astronomers have even enlisted the help of the public to help find and catalog them all. Anyone interested in joining the search as a citizen scientist can visit "The Milky Way Project," part of the "Zooniverse" of public astronomy projects, at [www.milkywayproject.org/](http://www.milkywayproject.org/) .

The flat plane of our galaxy is located toward the bottom of the picture, and the ring is slightly above the plane. The green haze seen at the bottom of the image is the diffuse glow of dust from the [galactic plane](#).

Provided by JPL/NASA

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