

WISE presents a cosmic wreath

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NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE) mission presents the "Wreath nebula." Though this isn't the nebula's official name (it's actually called Barnard 3, or IRAS Ring G159.6-18.5), one might picture a wreath in these bright green and red dust clouds -- a ring of evergreens donned with a festive red bow, a jaunty sprig of holly, and silver bells throughout. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCLA

(PhysOrg.com) -- Just in time for the holidays, astronomers have come across a new image from NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer,

or WISE, that some say resembles a wreath. You might even think of the red dust cloud as a cheery red bow, and the bluish-white stars as silver bells.

This star-forming nebula is named Barnard 3. [Baby stars](#) are being born throughout the dusty region, while the "silver bell" stars are located both in front of, and behind, the nebula.

The bright star in the middle of the red cloud, called HD 278942, is so luminous that it is likely causing most of the surrounding clouds to glow. The red cloud is probably made of dust that is more metallic and cooler than the surrounding regions.

The yellow-green region poking into the picture from the left like a sprig of holly is similar to the rest of the green "wreath" material, only more dense.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., manages and operates the Wide-field [Infrared Survey](#) Explorer for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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