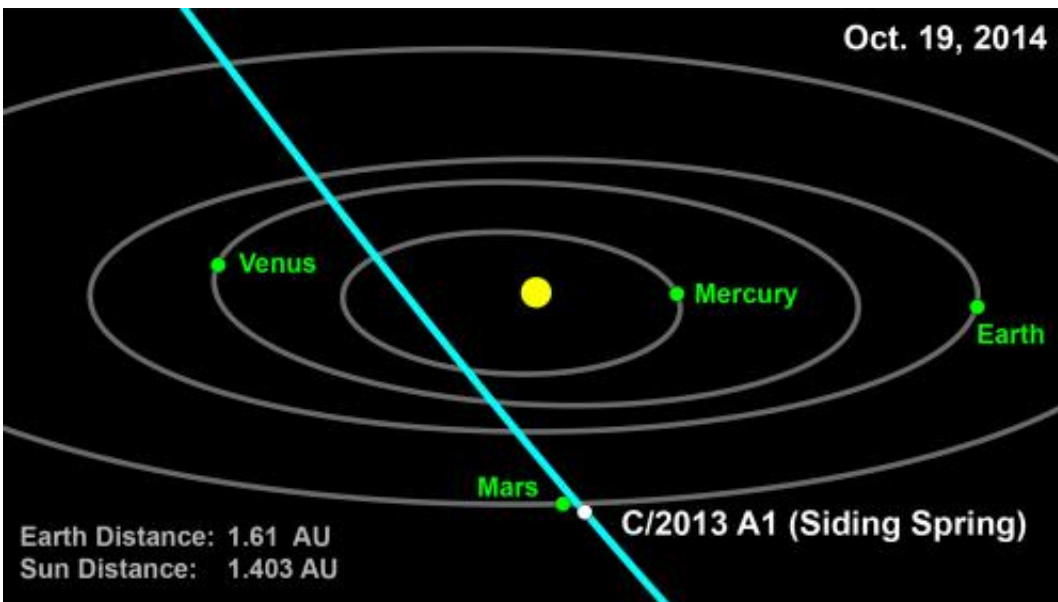


Comet to make close flyby of Red Planet in October 2014

April 15 2013



This computer graphic depicts the orbit of comet 2013 A1 (Siding Spring) through the inner solar system. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

New observations of comet C/2013 A1 (Siding Spring) have allowed NASA's Near-Earth Object Office at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. to further refine the comet's orbit.

Based on data through April 7, 2013, the latest orbital plot places the comet's closest approach to Mars slightly closer than previous estimates, at about 68,000 miles (110,000 kilometers).

At the same time, the new data set now significantly reduces the probability the comet will impact the [Red Planet](#), from about 1 in 8,000 to about 1 in 120,000.

The latest estimated time for close approach to Mars is about 11:51 a.m. PDT (18:51 UTC) on Oct. 19, 2014.

At the time of closest approach, the comet will be on the sunward side of the planet.

More information: Future observations of the comet are expected to refine the orbit further. The most up-to-date close-approach data can be found at: ssd.jpl.nasa.gov/sbdb.cgi?sstr=C%2F2013%20A1;orb=0;cov=0;log=0;cad=1;rad=0#cad .

Provided by NASA

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