

Image: Hubble uncovers a mysterious dwarf galaxy

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Credit: NASA/ESA

The drizzle of stars scattered across this image forms a galaxy known as UGC 4879. UGC 4879 is an irregular dwarf galaxy—as the name

suggests, galaxies of this type are a little smaller and messier than their cosmic cousins, lacking the majestic swirl of a spiral or the coherence of an elliptical.

This galaxy is also very isolated. There are about 2.3 million light years between UGC 4879 and its closest neighbor, Leo A, which is about the same distance as that between the Andromeda Galaxy and the Milky Way.

This galaxy's isolation means that it has not interacted with any surrounding galaxies, making it an ideal laboratory for studying star formation uncomplicated by interactions with other [galaxies](#). Studies of UGC 4879 have revealed a significant amount of star formation in the first 4 billion years after the Big Bang, followed by a strange 9-billion-year lull in [star formation](#) that ended 1 billion years ago by a more recent re-ignition.

The reason for this behavior, however, remains mysterious, and the solitary galaxy continues to provide ample study material for astronomers looking to understand the complex mysteries of star birth throughout the universe.

Provided by NASA

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