Last chance to clearly see 5 planets align until 2018

Posted by tbnBBM On 02/19/2016

Pictured above: Where to find Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Mars and Jupiter in the predawn sky. The left side of the image is looking to the southeast while the right side of the image is looking to the southwest. (Photo: EarthSky)

Early risers will have one more chance to see five planets align in the sky, a rare astronomical event.

After Saturday, Feb. 20, the spectacle won’t occur with such pristine views for another three years.

Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn have aligned each morning since Jan. 20, treating stargazers to a stunning sight.

For the best views, head outside an 60 to 90 minutes before sunrise. Any earlier and the planets won’t be above the horizon, keeping them out of sight. Any later and the sun will be too bright, washing out the glow of the planets.

Uranus and Neptune may also be visible in the first half of the night with the use of a telescope or binoculars.

Venus is usually the easiest planet to spot when the skies are clear as it is the second-brightest object in the night sky after the moon.

This bright planet can serve as a guide to finding Mercury, the dimmest of the five planets, and Saturn, the second dimmest.

While Mercury, Venus and Saturn are clustered over the southeastern horizon, Mars and Jupiter will be visible higher up in the sky to the south and southwest. While Mars may not be as bright as Jupiter, its distinct red glow makes it easier to spot.

Skywatchers in the Northeast may be out of luck as clouds will hold into Saturday morning, Glenn said. Cloudy skies will unfold across the mid-Atlantic and south-central U.S. as well.

"Sunshine is expected in the Southwest, central Plains and Southeast for Saturday morning," she said.

This event was the first time since 2005 that all five planets aligned.

Onlookers might be able to catch the planets aligning again over the summer, according to EarthSky. From Aug. 13 to Aug. 19, all five may be visible in the evening.

However, Mercury and Venus will sit low in the sky, making it more difficult to see them during the summer months than during the winter months.

Article, photo source:

http://www.accuweather.com/en/features/trend/planet_alignment_5_visible_mercury_venus_mars_jupiter_saturn_last_chance/55499504

Copyright © 2021 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.