

Thanet Astronomy Group

Astronomy for Everyone in Plain English

What to see August 10th – 13th

Meteors (Perseids)

From 10:00pm on 10th to 13th August, look north east toward the constellation **Perseus**, you could see 60 to 100 Meteors per hour. No equipment required, just **NO CLOUDS!**

Earth orbits the Sun at 103,000kmph covering a distance of 940,000,000km each year. It passes through debris left behind by the tails of comets that crossed the Earth's orbit. This debris and other small objects in space are the source of the Meteoroids.

Meteoroids are rocky/metallic object in space, small grains up to 1 metre across. When these hit Earth's atmosphere they become Meteors (shooting stars). As they pass through Earth's atmosphere they heat up to extremely high temperatures, due to friction with the atmosphere, hot enough to vaporise metal and rock! This is what causes them to turn into fireballs.

Usually all but the largest Meteors completely burn up before they reach the ground, which is a good thing! If a Meteor reaches the ground (lands) it becomes a Meteorite. Depending on how much of the original Meteoroid is left there could be a bit of a crater!



Where to look



What you should see

The comet responsible for **Perseid** Meteoroids is **109 P Swift-Tuttle** which passes Earth's orbit once every 133 years. There are many Meteor showers a year, because the solar system is littered with Meteorites from various comets and other sources. The solar system works like clockwork so we know the exact day that they are due.

The **Perseid Meteors** are one of the best Meteor displays to see. They take their name from the constellation **Perseus**, which is the constellation from which they appear to come from.

Contact us if you need help or more information.

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West Bay Cafe, Saturdays 1-4pm.