SKY CALENDAR APRIL 2020

An aid to enjoying the changing sky

Planetarium business office:
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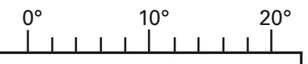
Use this scale to measure angular distances between objects on diagrams below.

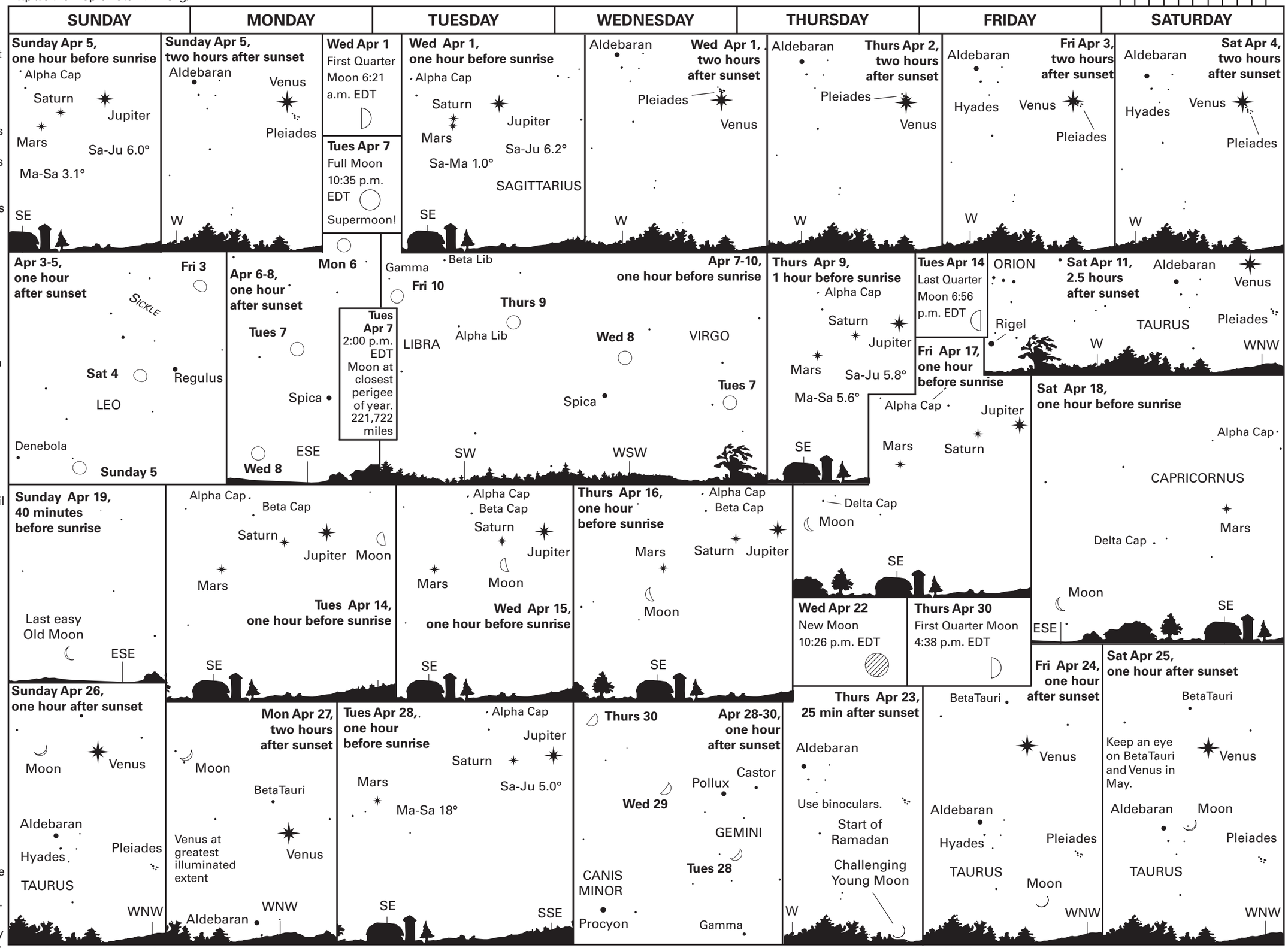


Evening Planets: Venus is shining brightly in the west after sunset. At mid-month Venus sets almost four hours after the Sun. Watch Venus pass the Pleiades star cluster during the first few days of April. Venus is a 46% crescent at the start of the month and slims down to 25% by the month's end. A 14% crescent Moon is to the left of a 28% crescent Venus on April 26. As the distance shrinks between Earth and Venus, Venus grows in apparent size. On April 1, Venus is 26 arcseconds across. By month's end, Venus is 40 arcseconds across.

Morning Planets: Mars starts the month 1° to the lower left of **Saturn** with **Jupiter** 6.2° to the upper right of the ringed planet. Watch throughout the month as Mars moves farther to the lower left of Saturn and Jupiter. The distance between Earth and Mars decreases from 135 million miles to 114 million miles during April. By the opposition of Mars in October 2020, the red planet will be just 39 million miles away. Jupiter and Saturn continue to converge. April 5 sees the pair 6° apart. By April 28, the two are separated by 5°. On December 21, the two giant planets will be just 0.1° apart. From May to August Jupiter and Saturn appear to move farther from each other due to their retrograde motion. **Mercury** might be spotted with difficulty very low in the east morning twilight on the first few days of the month.

The Islamic calendar traditionally starts its months with the first sighting of the young crescent Moon. The Moon at dusk on Apr 23 marks the start of **Ramadan**. In this case, sightings are impossible from northeast USA. They become possible with binoculars SW of a line from from NC to WA, and with the unaided eye from the southwest USA. Hawaii will have an easy naked-eye view.

Easter this year falls on April 12. Easter is traditionally calculated as the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the vernal equinox.



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ISSN 0733-6314

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