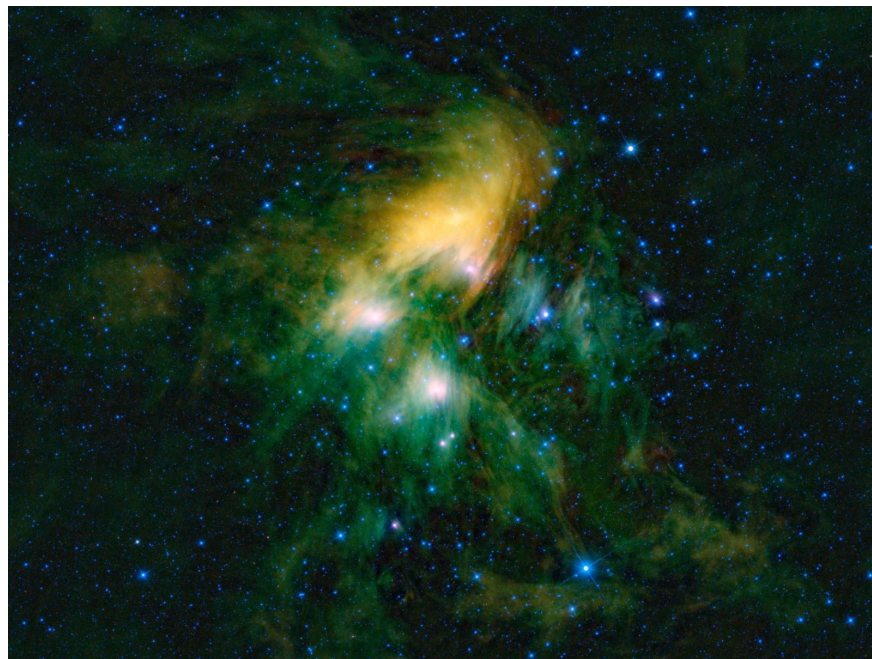


# How to watch Venus and the Pleiades star cluster join in a rare cosmic snuggle Friday

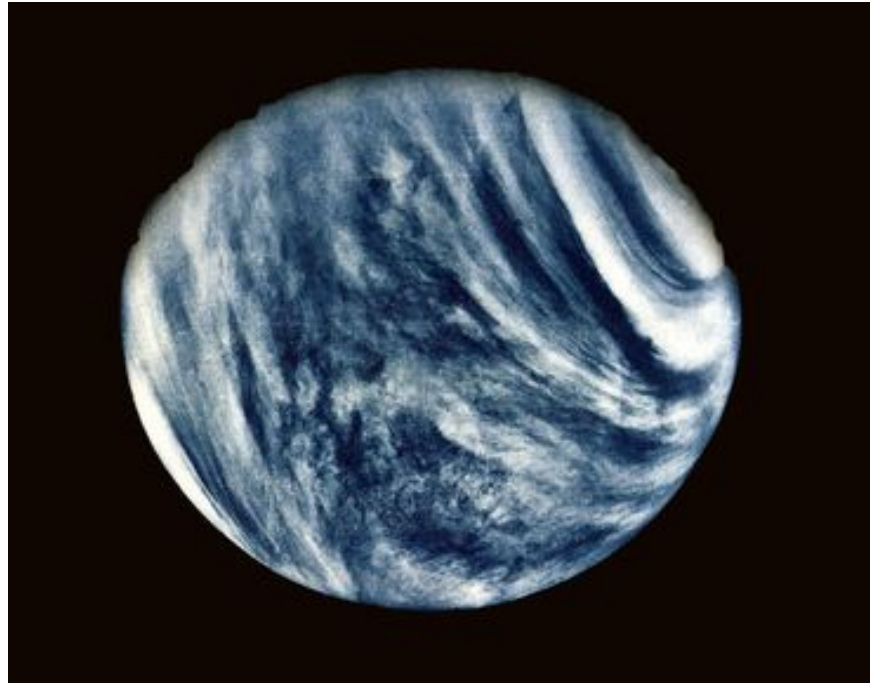
NASA says stargazers are in for a 'spectacular' show.

Looking up into the great, star-studded expanse of the night sky doesn't have to make you feel small.

On the evening of April 3, Venus will appear to be inside the Pleiades star cluster, a celestial sight that occurs every eight years. Now would be an excellent time to pause and contemplate the beauty of space.



The planet and the Pleiades will have their cozy conjunction on Friday night, but skygazers can watch Venus close in on the star cluster and then move away for a couple nights on either side of the event.



The best viewing will be after sunset. Look to the west. Venus is extremely bright right now, so let it guide your vision. You can watch with the naked eye, but a wide-field telescope or binoculars will give you an even better show.

Skywatchers in North America will get a special treat. They can look for Venus to pass close to Alcyone, the brightest star in the Pleiades, according to a Sky & Telescope statement on Tuesday.

Venus needs no introduction, but here's a quick refresher on the Pleiades. The Pleiades is an open star cluster also called the Seven Sisters or Messier 45. "It contains over a thousand stars that are loosely bound by gravity, but it is visually dominated by a handful of its brightest members," said NASA in an explainer in 2017. The Pleiades can be found in the constellation Taurus.

You don't have to rely on clear skies or be in a prime viewing area to enjoy the show. The Virtual Telescope Project in Europe will run a livestream of the conjunction at 10:30 a.m. PT on Friday.

If you need more convincing, NASA, an agency that's accustomed to seeing the marvels of space, said Venus' rendezvous with the Pleiades should be "spectacular."

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