

News from Nan

PHOTOGRAPHY

SPRING IS GALAXY SEASON – OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

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Markarian's Chain in the Virgo Cluster

This spring I have been concentrating on taking galaxy pictures with my Seestar telescope. This time of year we can see many galaxies that show the location of our Milky Way galaxy in the universe. Right now (July), off to the West where I live, is a good view of the constellations Virgo and Leo. There is a large

number of galaxies to be seen there in what is called the “Virgo Cluster” (and they are a mixture of “elliptical” and “spiral”). Our Milky Way is just one of thousands of galaxies in the cluster. The picture above shows a small part of the cluster visible in Virgo.

In the constellation Leo, next to Virgo, is another set of galaxies in the cluster, the Leo Galaxy Triplet. All three are spiral (i.e. they have “arms”).



The Leo Galaxy Triplet

Next is galaxy Messier 87. It just looks like a fuzzy spot (which makes it elliptical), but it is home to several trillion stars, thousands of star clusters, and it contains a black hole at its core. Messier 87 is a super-massive galaxy that is much larger than the Milky Way.



M 87 Galaxy, our giant neighbor

Finally there is Messier 49, another elliptical galaxy and the brightest galaxy in the cluster. It is about 60 million light years away. The light you see here started toward us when the first mammals walked the Earth. Some of the other fuzzy spots in the picture are also members of the Virgo Cluster.



Messier 49 Galaxy

If looking at this seems amazing, add to your amazement the information that astronomers think there are at least 10 million such clusters in the known universe!

◀ 2025 ◀ ASTRONOMY ◀ SEESTAR TELESCOPE ◀ VIRGO CLUSTER