

Astronomy Club of Asheville
May 2021 Sky Events

The Planet Mercury is Visible near the Pleiades Star Cluster at Dusk

On the evenings of **May 2-4**, look for the speedy and elusive innermost planet Mercury, near the Pleiades star cluster during twilight. Mercury will appear closest to the Pleiades on May 3rd.

Shining at magnitude -0.9, Mercury should be easy to spot at dusk, especially if you use a pair of binoculars. With a small telescope, you may notice that Mercury's 74% illuminated disk is a distinct gibbous shape. Consider that the reflected sunlight from the small planet's disk is traveling some 104 million miles – a journey of about 9 light minutes!

Venus is shown on the chart to the right, but, on these evenings, it will be challenging to observe because it is so low in the sky. By mid-May, Venus will be higher in the sky and easier to spot at dusk.

