

Planets at dusk: Venus, near mag. -4, is in WSW to SW at dusk and sets 1½ to 1¾ hours after sunset. **Venus overtakes Jupiter Sept. 1** and Spica Sept. 5. **On evening of Sept. 6, Moon, Venus, Jupiter, and Spica** all fit within a field 6° across. Through a telescope Venus' gibbous disk grows to 0.3 arcminute across at month's end, when it's 64 percent illuminated; watch for dramatic changes in coming months. **Jupiter**, of mag. -1.7, appears just 1.2° to Venus' upper right on Sept. 1. By Sept. 4, Jupiter is 3.3° to Venus' right, and by Sept. 11, 10° to Venus' lower right. Thereafter gap widens by nearly 1° per day as Jupiter sinks deep into twilight glow. Follow changing configuration of Venus-Jupiter-Spica using calendar diagrams, which track Spica until Sept. 20 and Jupiter until Sept. 27. On latter date Jupiter passes 3.1° N of Spica, a pairing visible to unaided eye from Hawaii and in binoculars from southern parts of FL and TX. Northerners will have to wait until Sept. 11, 2017 to observe Jupiter-Spica in conjunction.

Rising after nightfall: Mars rises in ENE within 3 hours after sunset on Sept. 1, backing to just over 2 hours after sunset by Sept. 30.

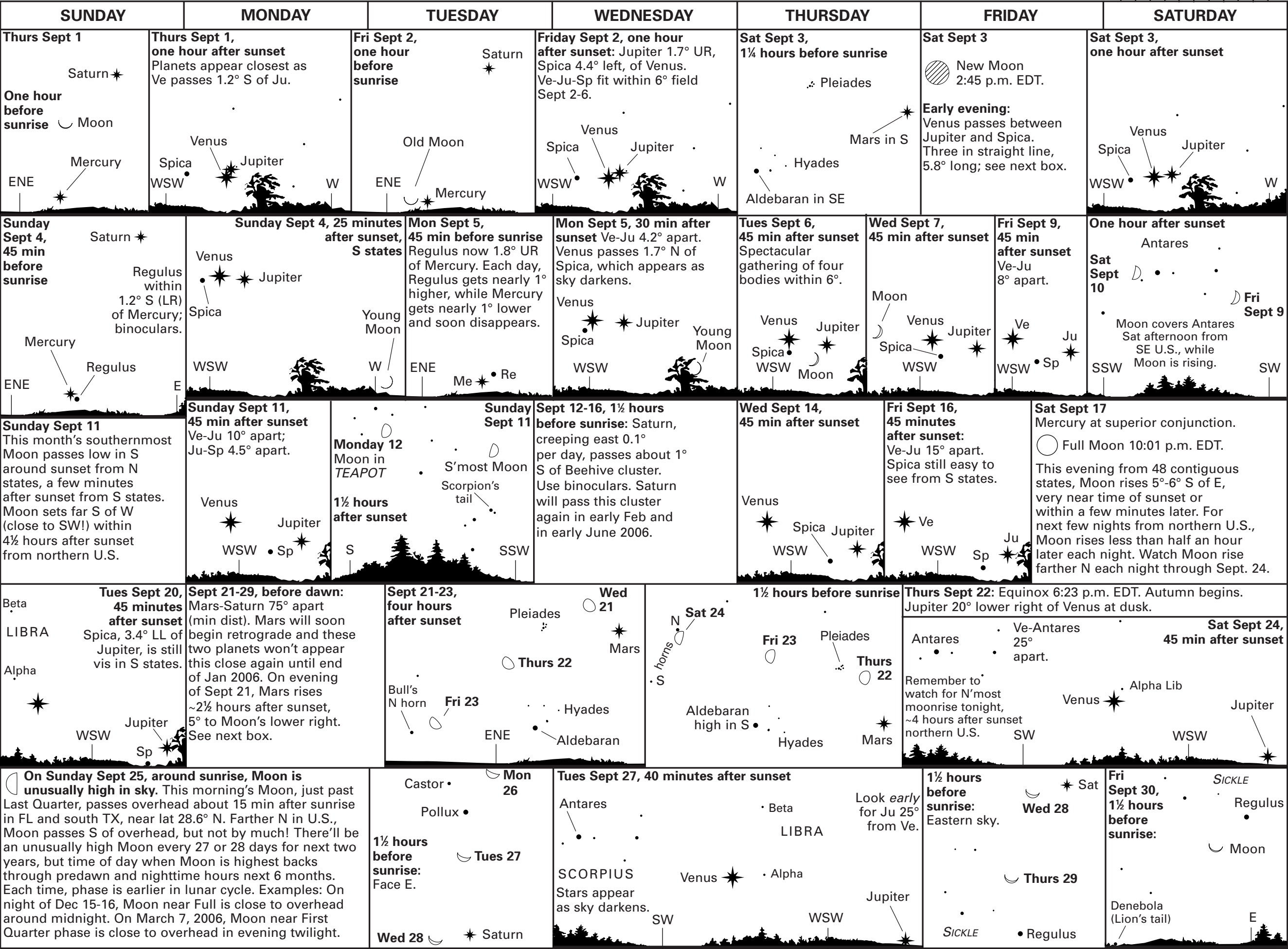
Planets at dawn: Mars as twilight brightens is found high in SSW to WSW, while **nearly doubling in brightness** from mag. -1.0 to -1.7. Mars' eastward motion slows, but not before it crosses from Aries into Taurus; see Oct. 1. At midmonth the Martian disk is 16 arcseconds across, 90 percent illuminated, with the South Pole and greatly shrunken summer polar cap tipped 11° toward Earth. **Saturn**, ascending eastern sky, is predicted to be of mag. +0.4 in late September, its faintest of the year. Procyon, a comparison star of the same magnitude, is handy nearby. In Cancer, Saturn passes about a degree S of the Beehive cluster around midmonth (see text box for Sept. 12-16) and ½ degree N of 4th-mag. star Delta on Sept. 29, when rings are 18° from edge-on. **Mercury** is visible very low N of E first few days as it brightens but sinks deeply into bright morning twilight; see Sept. 1-5.

Moon near planets (see calendar): Mornings of Sept. 1 & 2, evenings of Sept. 5-7, night of Sept. 21-22, and mornings of Sept. 27 & 28.

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SKY CALENDAR SEPTEMBER 2005
An aid to enjoying the changing sky

Use this scale to measure angular distances between objects on diagrams below.



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