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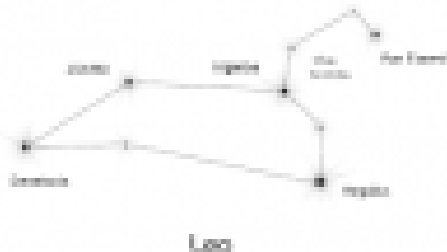
March 3, 2011 at 1:14pm

Star of the month: Algieba

by Rich Heffern

Eco Catholic

Second magnitude Algieba, Arabic for "forehead" of the lion, marks the radiant of the annual Leonid meteor shower. Located in the constellation Leo's mane, this double star is comprised of a pair of orange



and yellow

stars that can be observed in a good telescope. Algieba is

about 125 light years away and both stars are quite luminous, shining 180 times brighter than our sun. One star has a diameter over 20 times the size of the sun and the other is about 10 times the size. The orbital distance from each other is twice the distance Pluto is from us. In 2009, it was discovered that a large planet may orbit the primary star.

Leo can be seen rising in the east on clear evenings in March and will ride higher in the sky in April and May.

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