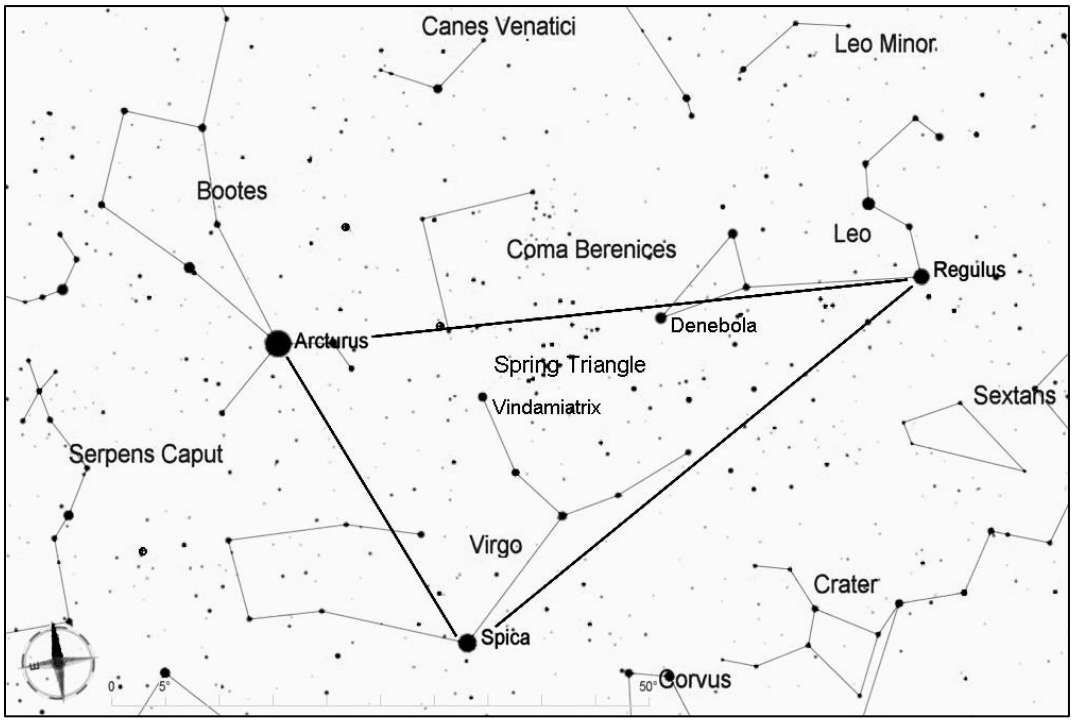
Izar (Epsilon Bootis), Double Star

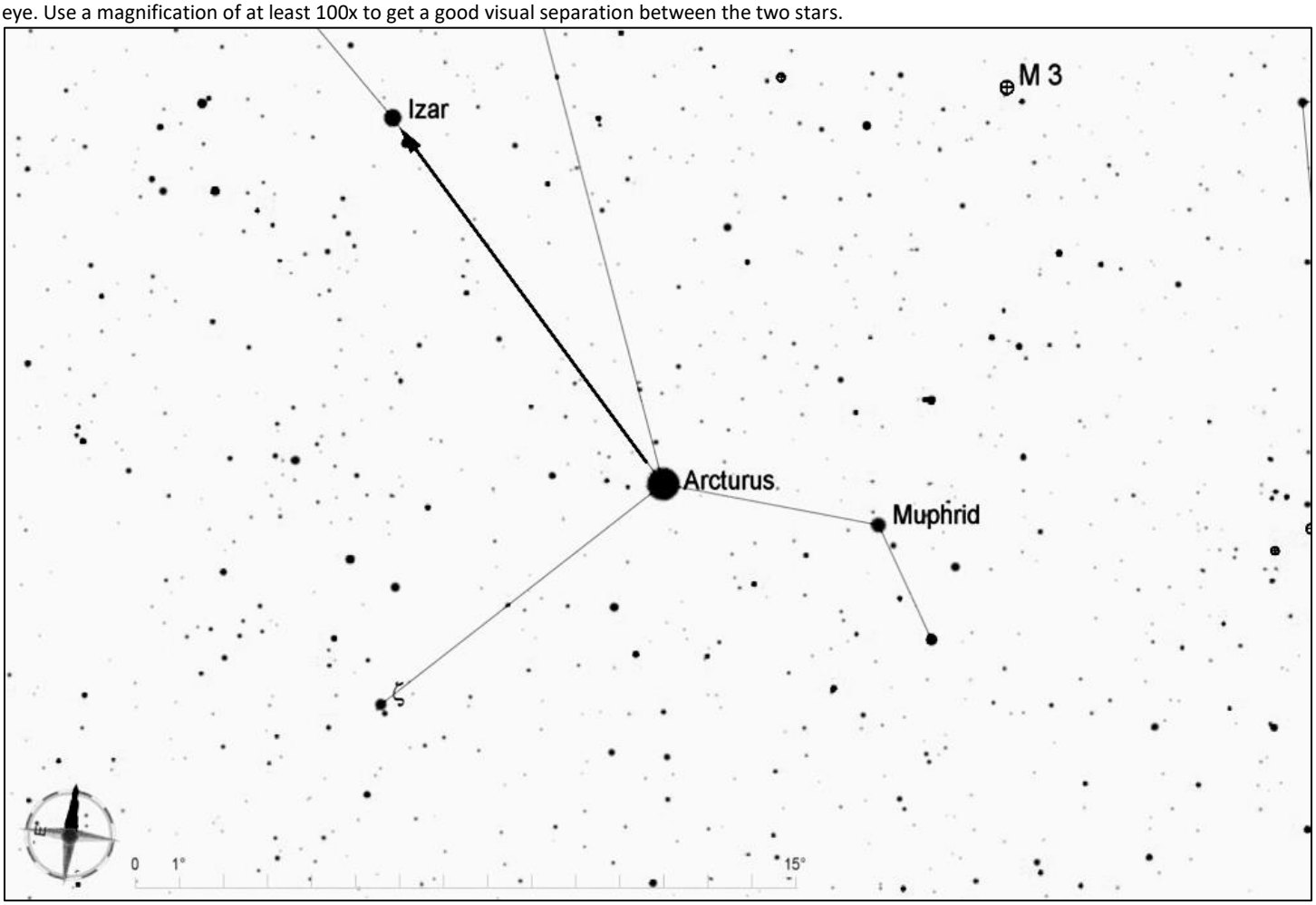
Izar (Epsilon Bootis) is a bright double star of beautifully contrasting colors. The brighter component is an orange giant star, magnitude 2.5. The dimmer star, magnitude 4.8, is white. The separation between the two stars is 2.9 arcseconds, and the actual distance between them is about 185 astronomical units. Their orbital period is uncertain, but it is more than 1000 years. The pair is about 200 light years away.



Start by finding the Spring Triangle, which consists of three widely-separated first magnitude stars--Arcturus, Spica, and Regulus. The Spring Triangle is high in the southeast sky in early spring, and in the southwest sky by mid-Summer. (To get oriented, you can use the handle of the Big Dipper and "follow the arc to Arcturus").

For this star hop, begin from brilliant Arcturus (magnitude 0).

For this easy star hop, look 10 degrees to the northeast of Arcturus to find Izar, the second brightest star in Bootes and easily seen with the naked eye. Use a magnification of at least 100x to get a good visual separation between the two stars.



Star hop from www.skyledge.net by Jim Mazur. Star charts created with *Cartes du Ciel.*