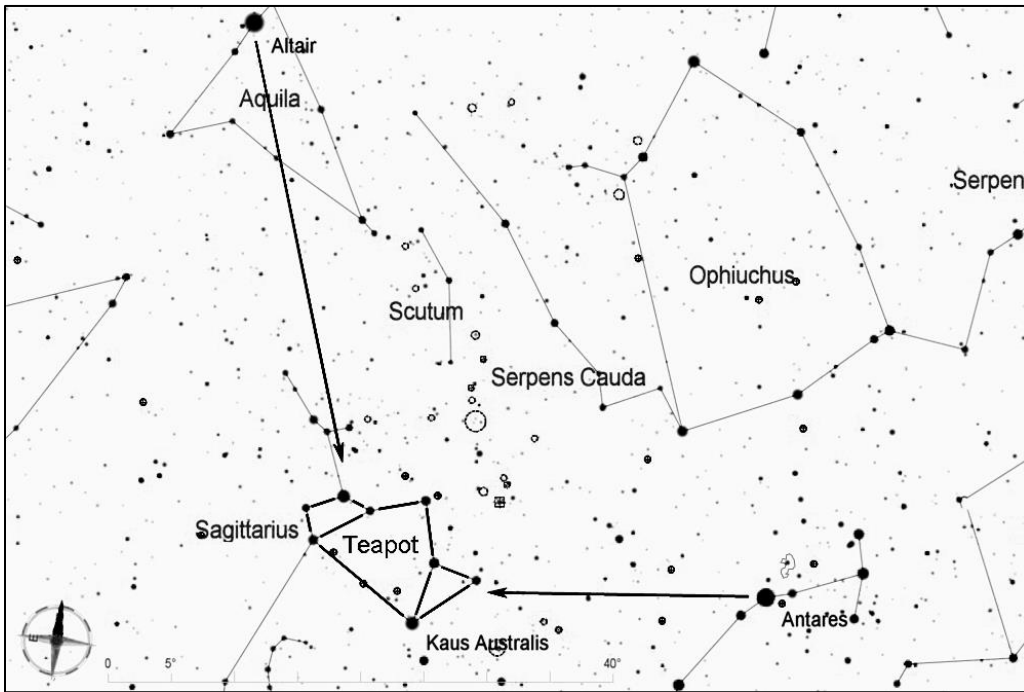


Messier 24 Star Cloud and Messier 23 and 25, Open Clusters in Sagittarius

M24 is a very rich section of the Milky Way about 1.5 degrees across. It is visible to the naked eye, and it is a wonderful sight in binoculars or a telescope with a wide field of view. It is flanked by two bright open clusters, M23 to the west and M25 to the east. Both of these are nice sights in binoculars and telescopes at low power. These two open clusters are each about 2000 light years away.



From mid-summer to early fall, the distinctive teapot shape of Sagittarius can be seen low in the southern sky during the evening. It is about 50 degrees south of Altair (part of the Summer Triangle) and about 30 degrees east of bright red Antares. It is well worth learning to recognize the teapot, for it can guide you to dozens of beautiful deep-sky objects.

From the star at the top of the Sagittarius teapot asterism, look 7 degrees to the north-northwest with the naked eye, and you should see M24 as a large hazy patch several times the diameter of the Moon, a bright section of the Milky Way. From the center of M24, M25 is about 3 degrees east, and M23 is about 5 degrees west. All three of these objects should be easy to see in binoculars or a finderscope.

