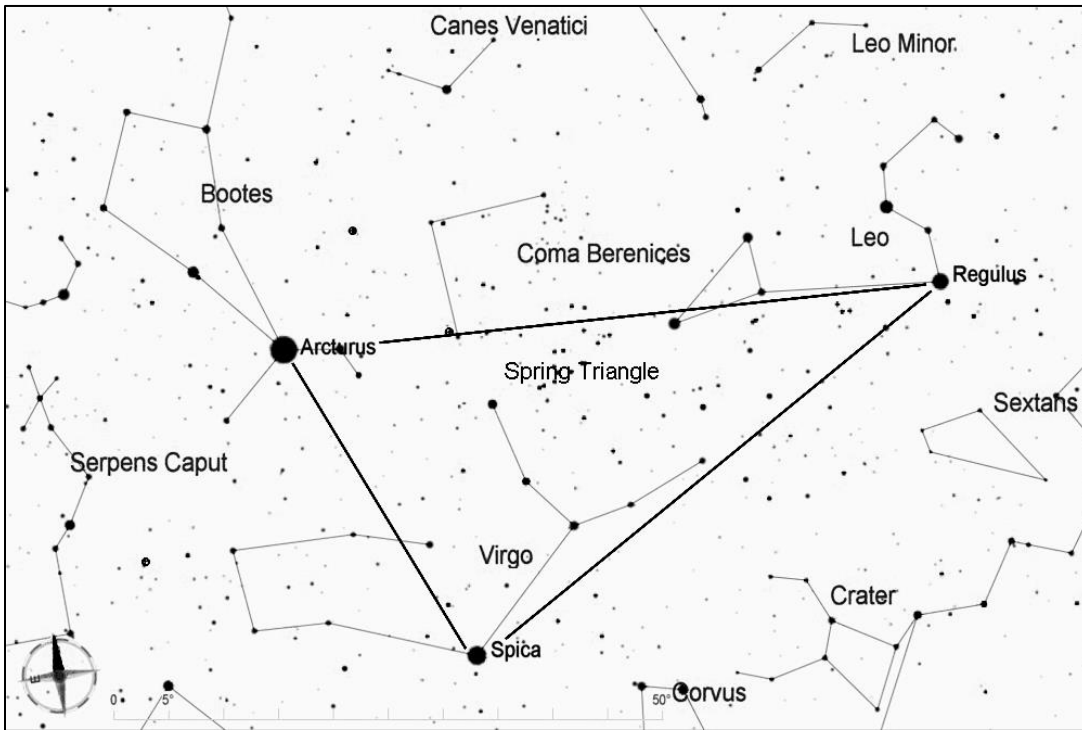


Messier 67, Open Cluster in Cancer

Messier 67 is a fairly bright open cluster of some 200 stars. It is estimated to be about 4 billion years old, making it one of the oldest known open clusters. It is not as well known as the nearby Beehive Cluster (Messier 44), but it is quite an attractive object when viewed with a small telescope at low power.



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 at Regulus in the constellation Leo, the lion.

The dim constellation Cancer, the crab, has no stars brighter than magnitude 3.5. As shown below, the constellation is located about half way between Regulus and first-magnitude Pollux in Gemini. From Regulus, look about 15 degrees to the west to find α Cancri, a magnitude 4 star. Then continue west about another 1.5 degrees and you will arrive at M67.

