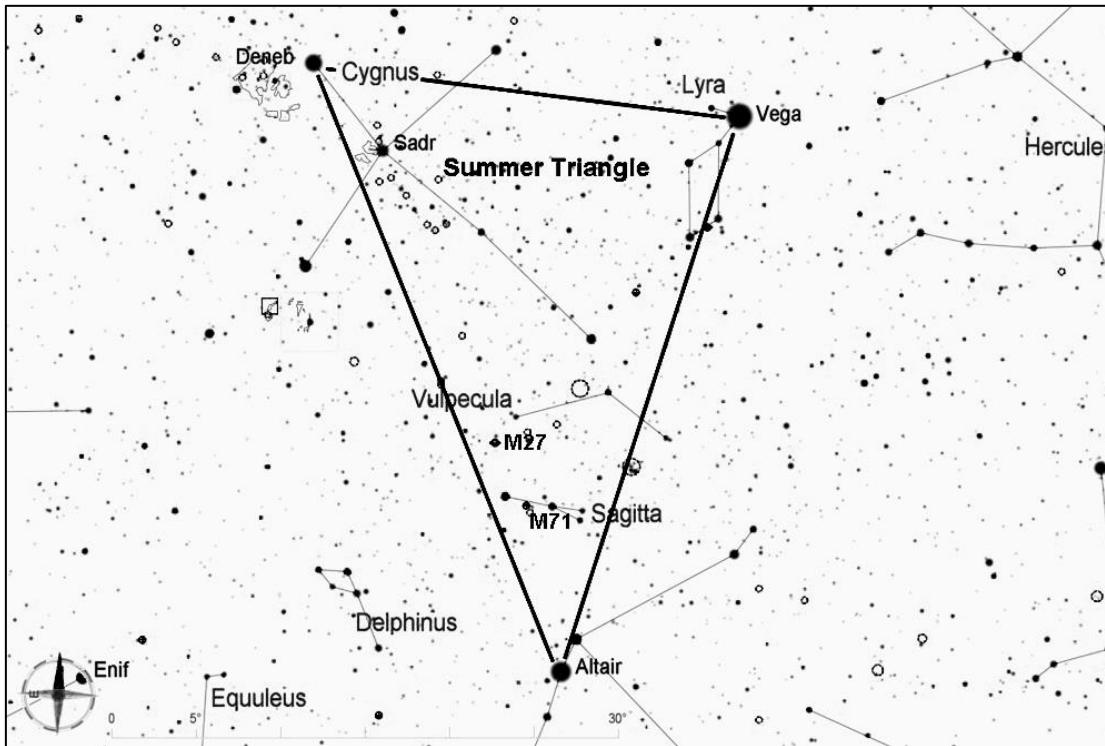


Messier 71, Globular Cluster in Sagitta

Messier 71 is an 8th magnitude globular cluster that is fairly loosely packed. With a telescope of medium to large aperture and magnification of 100x or more, it can be resolved into stars all the way to its center. This cluster is about 27 light years in diameter and about 13,000 light years away, making it one of the nearest globular clusters.



Start by finding the Summer Triangle, which consists of the three of the brightest stars in the sky—Vega, Deneb, and Altair. The Summer Triangle is high overhead throughout the summer, and it sinks lower in the west as fall progresses.

Look inside the Summer Triangle, to the north of Altair, to find the small constellation Sagitta, the arrow. Its four brightest stars do indeed form the shape of an arrow.

Point your telescope half way between the two stars that form the shaft of Sagitta, the arrow. Then give the telescope just a slight nudge to the south to arrive at Messier 71.

