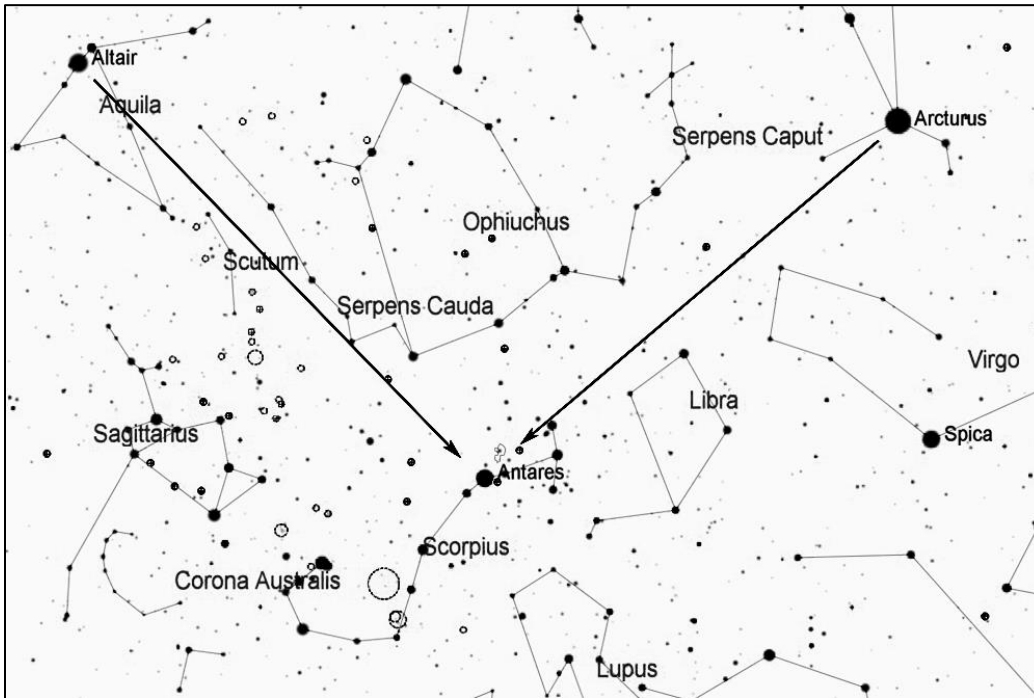


Messier 80, Globular Cluster in Scorpius

Messier 80 is a small but bright globular cluster that is easy to see in any telescope. Through small scopes it appears as a hazy ball with a much brighter center. With medium to large scopes, many of the stars around the periphery can be resolved, making an impressive sight. The cluster is about 33,000 light years away and about 95 light years in diameter.



Start by finding first magnitude Antares, the brightest and reddest star low in the southern sky on summer evenings. To get oriented, note that Antares is about 60 degrees southwest of Altair (part of the Summer Triangle) and a similar distance southeast of Arcturus (part of the Spring Triangle). Antares represents the eye of Scorpius, and on a clear night you should be able to see the curving shape of the scorpion if you have a good view of the southern horizon.

Once you locate Antares, look to its west for the vertical line of three bright stars that represent the claws of the scorpion. β (beta) Scorpii is the uppermost of these three stars, and M80 can be found just about half way between Antares and β Scorpii.

