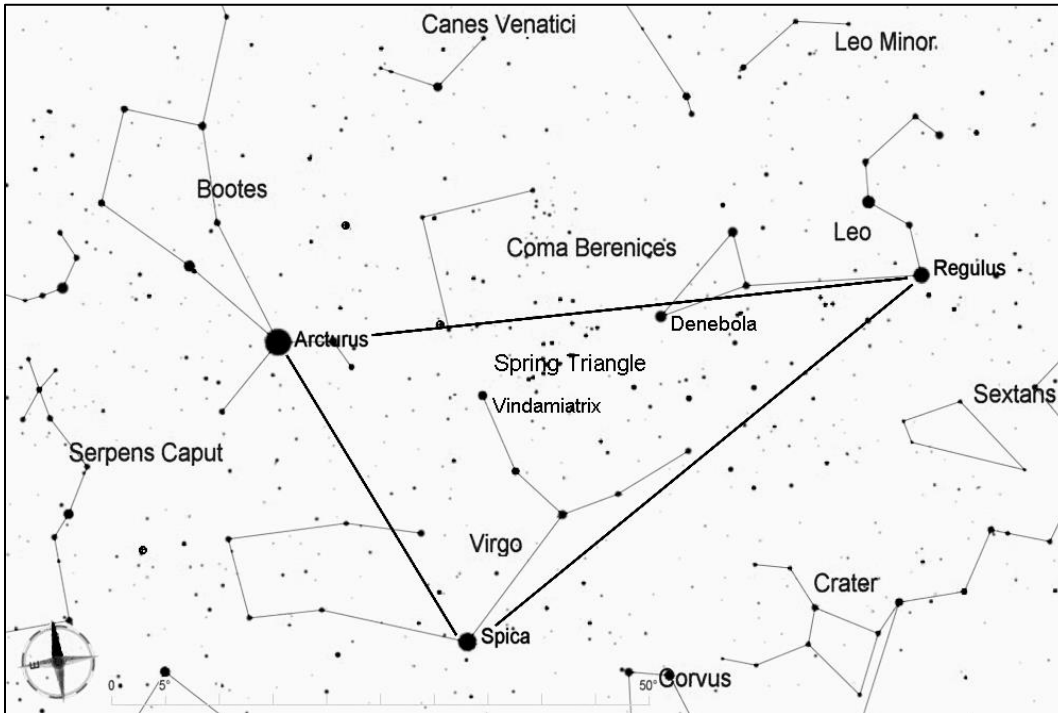


NGC 5248 (Caldwell 45), Galaxy in Bootes

This is a 10th magnitude spiral galaxy that can be seen in small telescopes as an oval object with a brighter center. With larger telescopes, some details in the spiral structure of the galaxy are visible. Although it is technically in the constellation Bootes, this galaxy is actually part of the Virgo cluster and can be found by starting from Vindemiatrix in Virgo, as described below.



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, look in the middle of the Spring Triangle for Denebola, the star representing the back end of Leo, the lion, and Vindemiatrix, a magnitude 2.8 star in Virgo. The galaxies of the Virgo cluster are found in the area between these two stars.

From Vindemiatrix, look 2 degrees to the east-southeast for a magnitude 6 star, and then another 2 degrees in the same direction for a magnitude 5 star (e Virginis). Then continue east another 5 degrees to the east and you will arrive at the location of NGC 5248. This can be a tricky object to find because there are few bright stars in this area of the sky.

