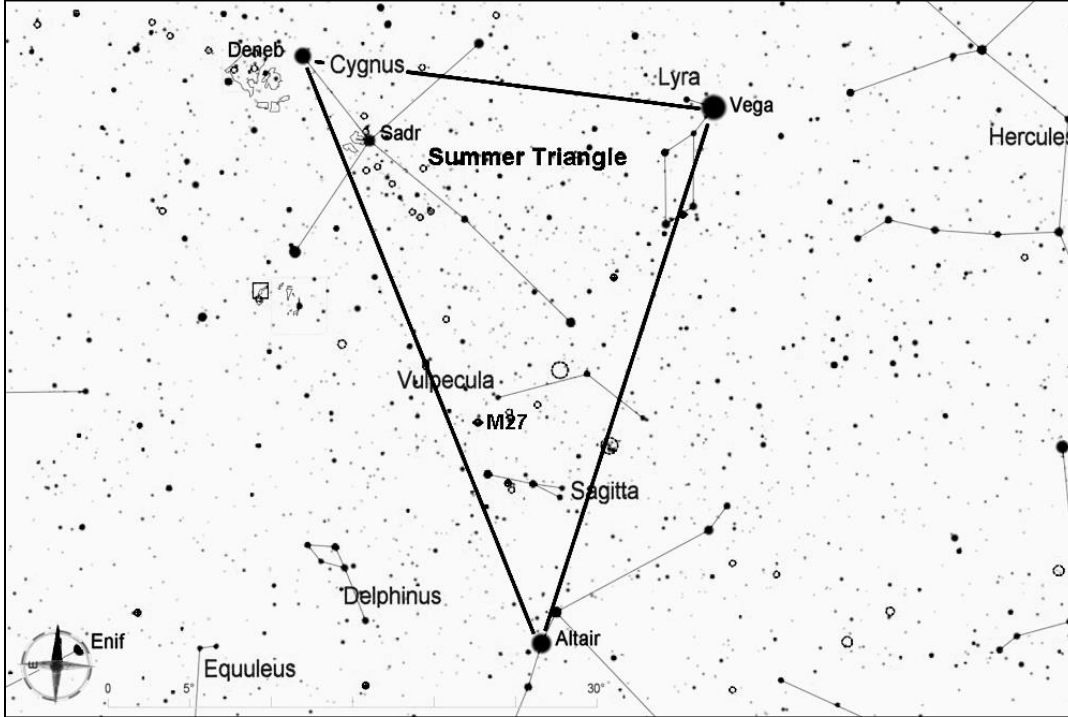


NGC 6826 (Caldwell 15), Blinking Planetary in Cygnus

If you look directly at the magnitude 10.6 star in the center of this nebula, it may be difficult to see the nebula itself. But look slightly to the side, and the hazy nebula suddenly "blinks" into view. (This is because our peripheral vision is more sensitive than central vision to dim light.) Looking back and forth can make the nebula appear to come and go, hence its nickname. The nebula is about 2 arcminutes in diameter, and it is about 4000 light years away.



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.

For this star hop, start from Deneb, the first-magnitude star that forms the tail of Cygnus, the swan (or if you visualize the brightest stars of Cygnus as a cross shape, Deneb is at the top of the cross).

From Deneb, look about 5 degrees to the northwest for Omicron 2 Cygni, then follow this line another 7 degrees to Theta (θ) Cygni, magnitude 4.5. From Theta, move your scope just 1-1/3 degrees to the east and you will see the 10th magnitude star at the center of the nebula. Using medium to high magnification may make it easier to see the nebula.

