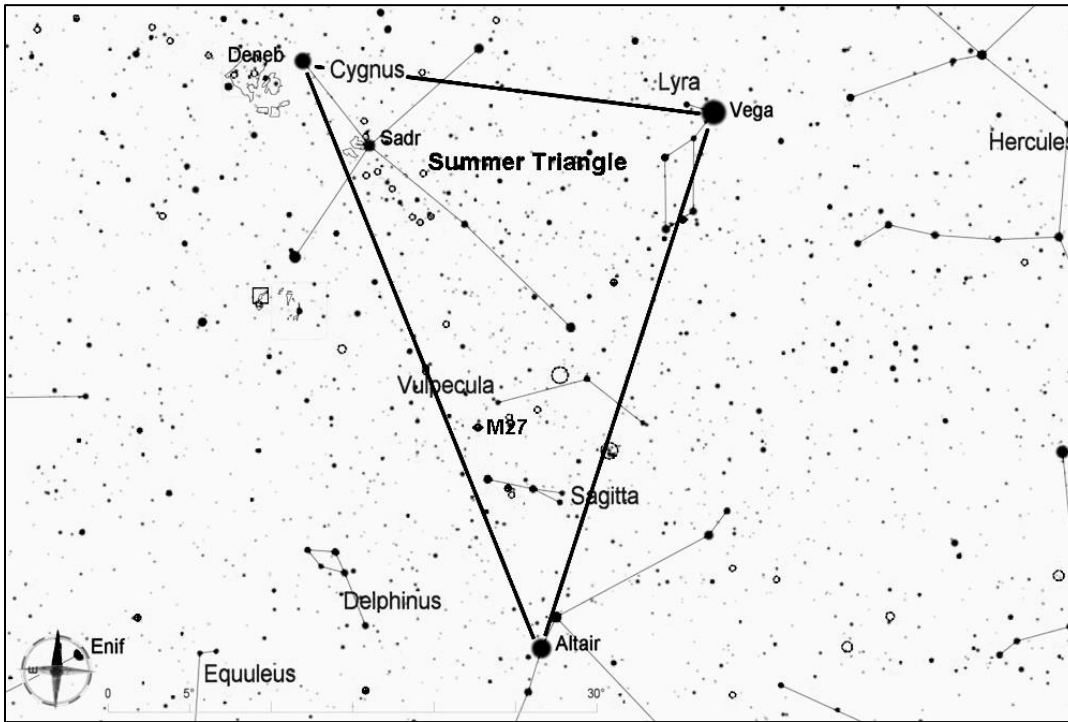


NGC 6888 (Caldwell 27), Crescent Nebula in Cygnus

This nebula forms a crescent shape roughly 18' x 12' elongated in the north-south direction. In the center of the crescent is a 7.5 magnitude star that is providing the energy that causes the nebula to glow. About 6' to the east of this star is another star of similar brightness (actually a double star if you look closely) through which the nebula appears to pass. The nebula is estimated to be about 5000 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 to the southwest for Sadr, the magnitude 2 star at the center of the Cygnus cross shape. Continue past Sadr another 2-1/2 degrees in the same direction and you will arrive at the location of the Crescent Nebula. Look for a 7.5 magnitude star that is in the center of the crescent shape. If you have a nebula filter, the nebula will be a lot easier to see.

