

## **Lyrid meteor shower peaks Monday**

Written by Stephanie Groves  
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DELPHOS — The annual Lyrid meteor shower has been on display since April 16 and will be visible until Thursday. Starting around 1 a.m. Monday, the Lyrid's will be above the horizon, start its peak time and be visible until the sun rises when they will be right overhead.

The Lyrid meteor shower is among the oldest of known meteor showers, with records going back for some 2,700 years. Apparently, the ancient Chinese observed the Lyrid meteors "falling like rain" in the year 687 BC.

Every year, in the later part of April, our planet Earth crosses the orbital path of Comet Thatcher, which was discovered in 1861 by Carl Wilhelm Baeker and the Orbit discovered by A.E. Thatcher for who the comet was named after. Comet Thatcher last visited the inner solar system in 1861 and is not expected to return until the year 2276.

Lima Astronomical Society (L.A.S.) President Jay Edwards explained what the observer is likely to see in the wee hours on Monday morning.

"On average, during peak time, an observer will see between 10-20 meteors per hour," Edwards added.

In 1982 the Earth passed through a heavy cloud left by the comet and it was reported to be a 90 meteor per hour shower that year. In 1803 it was such a large amount falling during the peak, it alarmed many people.

Comets are usually made primarily from ice, along with dust, rocks, and frozen gases. The persistent trails are made of gases and dust and the dust particles are what we see as a meteor ripping through the sky at roughly 20 - 30,000 mph.

Those viewing the spectacular show should not have any issues with an interfering Moon or

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other celestial bodies. Edwards said that Star Vega should not interfere with viewing the Lyrid's, it should make it helpful for beginners to grasp where in the sky the Lyrid's will be coming from. As a general rule, the higher that Vega climbs into the sky, the more meteors that you're likely to see. That's why the greatest numbers of meteors generally fly in the dark hours before dawn.

In addition, the Moon will be off to the Southwest and should not impact the viewing too much.

"By 3 a.m., the moon will be below the horizon," Edwards detailed. "This should be the best possible time to view them with no other bright light sources in the sky.

Watch for upcoming celestial events this year. Edwards says the two best yearly meteor showers are the Perseid's meteor shower, which displays up to 60 meteors per hour. In August, L.A.S. holds an annual Perseids viewing at Kendrick Woods in conjunction with Johnny Appleseed Park District (JAPD). There is also a viewing at Kendrick of the Geminids meteor shower in early December with up to 120 multicolored meteors flying through the sky.

"Seasky.org has a great astronomical calendar each year with every minor and major event coming up," he added. "There are some cool events this year, the conjunction of Venus and Jupiter.

At sunset on May 28, Venus and Jupiter will be within a degree of each other with Mercury close by. In October, Comet ISON will make an appearance and will be visible with the naked eye. In November, Astronomers hope it will be bright enough to see in the daylight.

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