

October Evening Skies

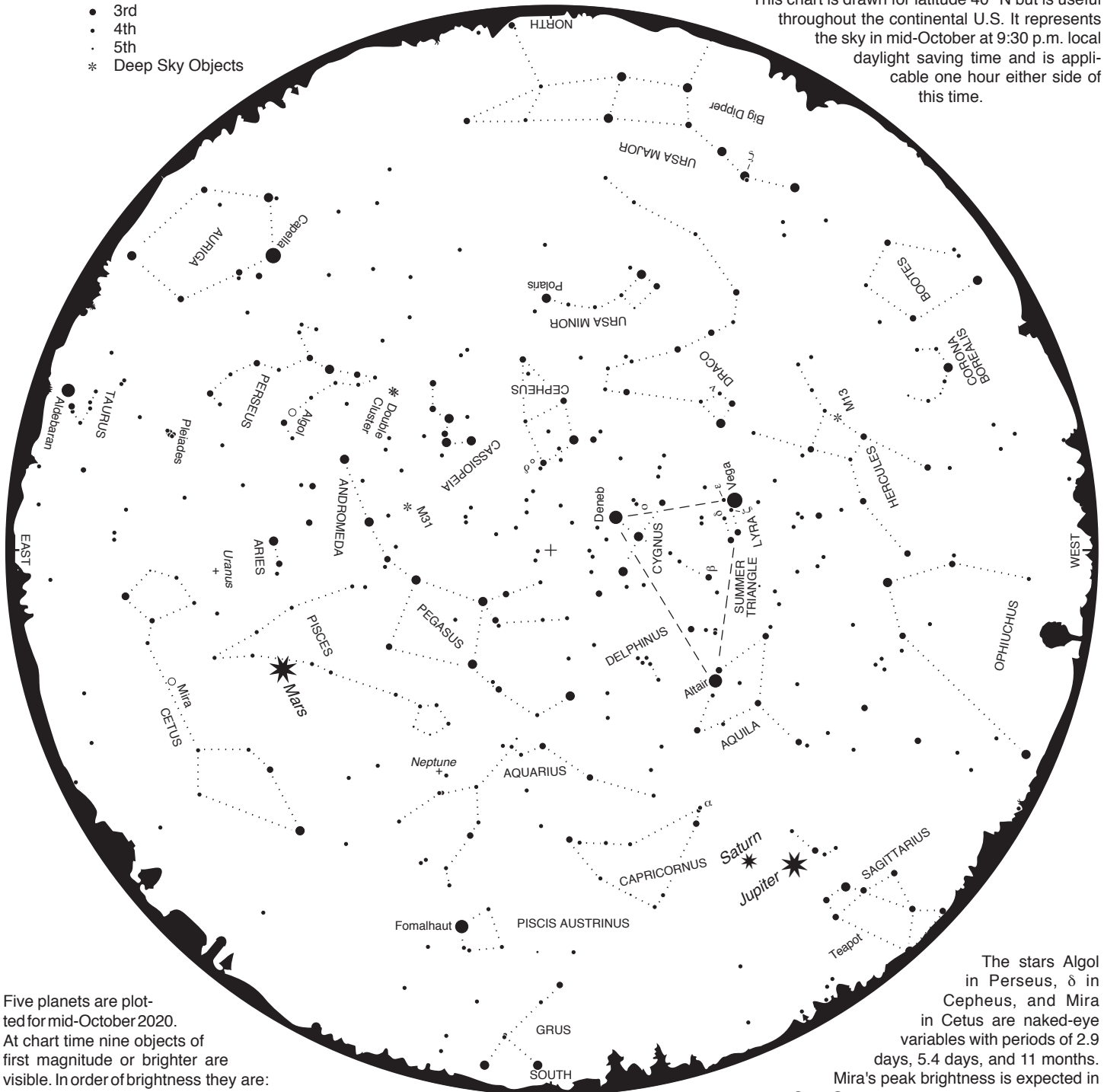
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This chart is drawn for latitude 40° N but is useful throughout the continental U.S. It represents the sky in mid-October at 9:30 p.m. local daylight saving time and is applicable one hour either side of this time.

LEGEND Star Magnitudes

- Zero or brighter
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th
- * Deep Sky Objects



Five planets are plotted for mid-October 2020. At chart time nine objects of first magnitude or brighter are visible. In order of brightness they are: Mars, Jupiter, Vega, Capella, Saturn, Altair, Aldebaran, Fomalhaut, and Deneb.

Our usual monthly maps are designed for stargazers just beginning to find their way around the sky. This month's map is useful for serious stargazing from dark locations. It contains many more stars, inclusive to magnitude 4.5, plus some fainter stars as needed to complete patterns or assist in locating special objects.

A selection of double stars (labeled with Greek letters) and "deep sky objects" is also plotted. Most are visible to the unaided eye or binoculars. The double stars, in order of decreasing angular separation, are ζ UMa, δ Lyr, α Cap, ο Cyg, ε Lyr, ν Dra, ζ Lyr, β Cyg.

The stars Algol in Perseus, δ in Cepheus, and Mira in Cetus are naked-eye variables with periods of 2.9 days, 5.4 days, and 11 months. Mira's peak brightness is expected in Sept-Oct. 2020.

Two open or galactic clusters are noted. The Pleiades, or Seven Sisters, in Taurus is a treat for unaided eye and binoculars. The Double Cluster in Perseus is a fine object if the sky is dark.

M31 is the famous Andromeda Galaxy, a collection of 300 billion stars located 2.5 million light years from Earth. It is barely visible to the unaided eye.