



Astro Advisory

*Notice of an upcoming
astronomical event.*

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QUADRANTID METEOR SHOWER IN 2018

Rosman, NC (December 28, 2017) – Astronomers at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) alert the public to the Quadrantid Meteor Shower in early January.

Meteors result from particles of dust causing the atmosphere to glow as the particles enter the upper atmosphere of the Earth. Most meteor showers are caused by debris from comets, but a couple, like the Quadrantids, are known to originate from asteroids. The particles that cause the Quadrantid meteor shower originate from the asteroid 2003 EH1. Since the orbit of 2003 EH1 is highly inclined to the orbit of the Earth, the Earth passes through it very quickly. Thus, while meteors of the Quadrantid meteor shower can be seen for several nights, the peak is an extremely short one, lasting only a few hours.

In 2018 the Quadrantids are predicted to reach a peak of about 120 meteors per hour 3-4 p.m. EST on Wednesday, January 3. Since the peak is narrow and occurs in the afternoon and since the moon will be close to full (Full Moon occurs on New Years night.), moonlight will interfere with viewing of fainter meteors. But, for those looking to spot the brightest Quadrantids, look for them after midnight in the east radiating out of a point between the constellations of Hercules and Boötes. One should observe from a clear, dark location with a good horizon.

Incidentally, meteor showers are usually named after the constellation out of which the meteors seem to originate, i.e., their *radiant point*. However, there is no modern constellation of *Quadrans*. Instead, this shower retains its name from the obsolete constellation of *Quadrans Muralis* an instrument used to measure the positions of stars.

PARI is a public not-for-profit public foundation established in 1998. Located in the Pisgah National Forest southwest of Asheville, NC, PARI offers STEM educational programs at all levels, from K-12 through post-graduate research. For more information about PARI and its programs, visit www.pari.edu.

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