

Planetary Nebulae

An In-Depth Guide to their Physics and Observation

Planetary nebulae have been favorite targets of amateur astronomers for a long time. This is at least in part because of their high surface brightness and ability to show visible color. The popularity of observing planetary nebulae is due to the fact that there are targets amongst this set of objects for observers with small telescopes to those with large telescopes. The use of the nebula filter also means that, unlike galaxies, they can be observed from light polluted environments. Apart from the classic Messier four – M27, 57, 76 and 97 – there are a many bright NGC planetary nebulae, and even some IC ones that show both colour and structure in average size amateur telescopes. They are popular targets with CCD imagers because their size allows them to fit on the high resolution CCD images now being generated. Although the theory sections of this book are intended mainly for experienced amateur astronomers, Planetary Nebulae: their Physics and Observation will also appeal to relative newcomers who are keen to learn more about these fascinating objects. This book is a detailed guide to understanding and observing planetary nebulae. It explains the theories of what planetary nebulae are, their origins and physics, and the history of their discovery. It describes what tools are needed to observe and image them. There is a comprehensive catalog of planetary nebulae with descriptions, drawings and images. Finally, it provides a challenging list of objects for practical amateurs to observe.

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