

CAROLINA SKIES | APRIL 2020



To use your star chart, hold it over your head. To avoid ruining your night vision with a bright flashlight, use a red light. Or stretch a red balloon or brown paper bag over your flashlight for a muted glow.

Align north on the chart with north in the night sky by finding Polaris, the North Star. Begin by locating the **Big Dipper**. Draw a line between the Dipper's "pointer stars" **to guide you to Polaris**, going about four and a half times the distance between the two pointer stars. The Dipper's handle "arcs" toward the orange star Arcturus, where you can "speed on to Spica" and then "curve on to Corvus."

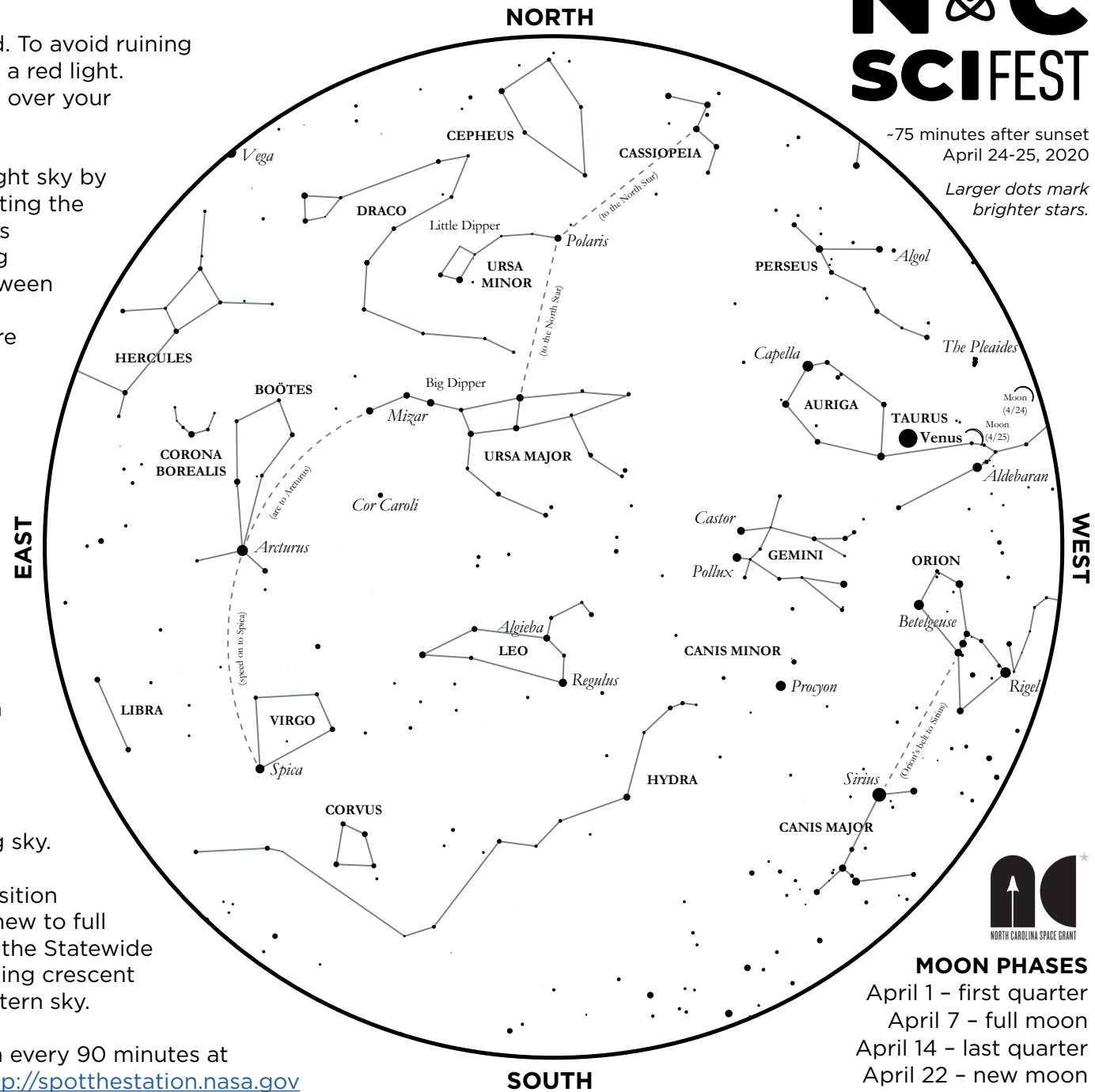
The winter constellations Orion, Taurus, and Gemini are still visible in early spring in the west. Tracing a line through **Orion's belt** will lead you westward to **Aldebaran** (the orange "eye" of Taurus) or eastward to **Sirius** (the brightest star in the night sky).

These winter stars and constellations are followed across the sky by the spring patterns Leo, Ursa Major (which includes the Big Dipper) and Virgo. Find **Leo** the Lion just south of the Big Dipper by locating the backward question mark that outlines Leo's head and mane.

Bright **Venus** appears in the western evening sky.

Where's the **Moon**? The Moon's apparent position changes as it goes through its phases from new to full and back again in about a "moonmonth." During the Statewide Star Party on April 24 and 25, 2020, the waxing crescent Moon will be visible in the early evening western sky.

The **International Space Station** orbits Earth every 90 minutes at 17,000 mph. When can you see it? Check <http://spotthestation.nasa.gov>



-75 minutes after sunset
April 24-25, 2020

Larger dots mark
brighter stars.



MOON PHASES

- April 1 - first quarter
- April 7 - full moon
- April 14 - last quarter
- April 22 - new moon
- April 30 - first quarter