

## 9 Antares in the constellation Scorpio

Distance

600 light years

Luminosity

65,000 times that of the sun

Colour

Orange-red

Surface temperature

3,400 K

Diameter

700 times the diameter of the sun

(To Planet Trail scale: 1000 m)

Mass

12 solar masses

Evening visibility

June to August

Antares is the brightest star in the constellation Scorpio and the eleventh brightest star we can see in the sky. Its relatively low surface temperature means that it emits a particularly large amount of infrared radiation, which our eyes cannot see. With a radius of around 500 million kilometres, Antares would reach beyond Mars' orbit if it replaced our sun in the solar system. It falls into the red supergiant phase of the star life cycle.

Only a beginner's telescope is needed to see that Antares is a binary star. Both stars orbit their common centre of gravity in just under 900 years. The companion star is roughly 170 times more luminous than our sun.

Because of its vast distance from Polaris, Antares is only above the horizon for a few hours during its daily orbit. Even at its highest point in the south, it doesn't quite reach an altitude of 20 degrees.

Other bright (visible to us) stars in the constellation Scorpio:

Larawag      Distance:      64 light years

Dschubba    Distance:    400 light years

Akrab        Distance:    530 light years

## 9 Constellation Scorpio

Scorpio is an impressive constellation in the southern sky. It lies between the constellations of Sagittarius and Libra. Only the upper part of Scorpio is visible to us. The larger part of the constellation always remains below the horizon in the northern hemisphere. The visible part looks like a fan, extending from Antares. The constellation is positioned along the ecliptic. Seen from Earth, the sun, moon and planets pass by the constellation. The sun spends just over a week in this constellation in November. Scorpio sits near the centre of the Milky Way and contains a number of star clusters and nebulae. The constellation is depicted by the figure of a scorpion. Antares is located near the head of the scorpion. It was the heart of the beast in past depictions, which used constellation boundaries that are no longer valid.

There are various accounts of the constellation in Greek mythology.

The Orion myth tells the following story: Artemis, goddess of the hunt, was hunting with Orion on the island of Chios. To prevent Orion from getting too close to her, Artemis made a scorpion emerge from a hill. Orion was stung by the scorpion and died as a result. As punishment, the animal was placed at almost opposite ends to Orion in the sky so that the two enemies would always be far apart.