

# Astronomy Club of Asheville

## August 2026 Highlight

### Conjunction of the Moon with Antares

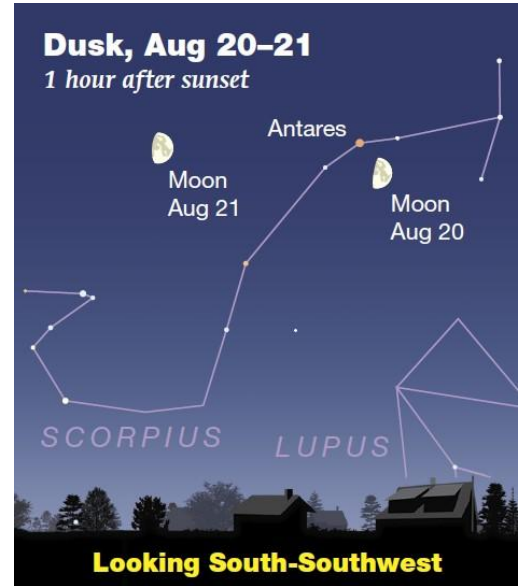
Just after sunset on the evenings of **August 20-21**, the waxing gibbous Moon can be observed nearby the bright star Antares in the constellation Scorpius, the Scorpion.

Of the 12 traditional zodiac constellations, Scorpius is one of the few that actually somewhat resembles its namesake.

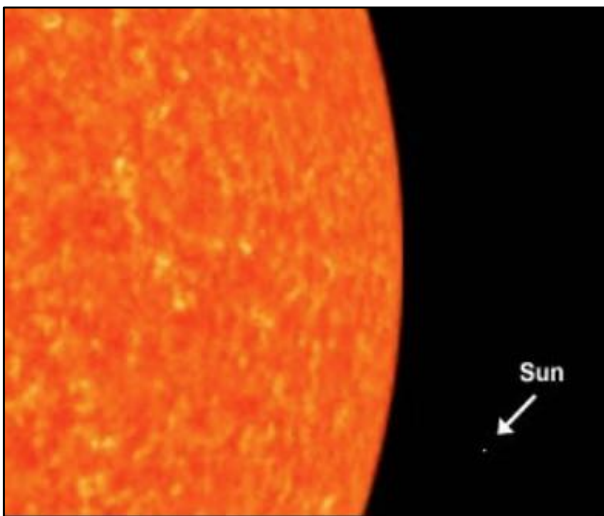
### More about the star Antares...

Antares is the brightest star in the constellation Scorpius and one of the brightest stars visible in Earth's night skies. It is located along the ecliptic, some 550 light years away from our Sun.

The word Antares comes from the Greek and means "rival (ant) of Ares", and Ares is the Greek word for Mars. Translated for us, Antares is the "rival of Mars" (the planet) -- its ruddy color rivals that of Mars. And, because Antares is located along the ecliptic (the approximate path of the planets across our sky), Mars passes (about every 2 years) very near its rival in our skies – presenting the two reddish objects side by side. The last conjunction of these two rivals was in November 2025, and the next one will be in October 2027.



*Illustration courtesy of SKY & TELESCOPE*



The sun is a mere dot in this image when compared in size to the giant Antares star.

As a red supergiant star, Antares is around 850 times the diameter of the sun, and, if it was placed in the center of our solar system, it would reach beyond the orbit of Mars.

Like most large stars, Antares will live fast and die young. Its life will end with a rapid collapse of its enormous mass – some 11-14 times the mass of our sun – that will cause an immense supernova explosion. This will ultimately leave a rather small, but very dense, neutron star or possibly a stellar black hole.\*\*\*