

EXAMINER

WISH UPON A STAR

THE PERSEIDS METEOR SHOWER SHINES ESPECIALLY BRIGHTLY THIS YEAR.

BY ELIZABETH GEHRMAN

1862

Year the Swift-Tuttle comet, whose debris hitting Earth's atmosphere gives us the Perseids, was discovered by Lewis Swift of New York and Maine native Horace Tuttle, an assistant astronomer at Harvard College Observatory

AUGUST 11

Expect **peak meteor rates** this evening through early a.m. August 12; the entire annual show started July 17 and lasts until August 24

2126

Next time the Swift-Tuttle comet will be visible to the naked eye

10 P.M.

Time the Perseids start appearing in the Northern Hemisphere

Best time for viewing

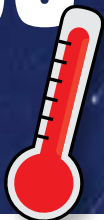
Pre-dawn hours

Best place for viewing

As far from city lights as possible

3,000+

Temperature in Fahrenheit that a meteor can reach



Approximate **speed** in miles per hour at which Perseids move

133,200

1/16TH

Diameter in inches of the faintest visible Perseids meteor, about the size of a grain of sand

1

Diameter in inches of the brightest Perseids, about the size of a marble

3

Width in feet of a typical Perseid trail

1,000

Approximate length in feet of what are probably the longest Perseid trails

80 TO 120

Perseids visible per hour in an average year

200

Predicted number of Perseids visible per hour this year, thanks to Jupiter's pull on the meteor stream



“MEN OF GENIUS ARE OFTEN DULL AND INERT IN SOCIETY; AS A BLAZING METEOR, WHEN IT DESCENDS TO EARTH, IS ONLY A STONE.”

— HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

6 TO 10

Scientists' best guesstimate of the diameter in miles of the asteroid we think wiped out the dinosaurs



16

Approximate diameter in miles of the nucleus of the Swift-Tuttle comet, the largest object to pass near the Earth

SOURCES: BILL WALLON; WILLIAM COOKE, LEAD NASA METEOROID ENVIRONMENTS OFFICE; SPACE.COM; AMERICAN METEOR SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPH AND PLANETS FROM SHUTTERSTOCK; DINOSAUR AND THERMOMETER BY CHLOE MEISTER/BOSTON GLOBE