

Quick Guide to Starry Night

Aug 2005

When Starry Night opens, it may ask you to update some files. If you are on a lab computer, tell it no.

Most of the commonly used controls are located in a toolbar across the top of the window. Other controls are accessible from the side panes on the left side of the window. Special purpose controls are only available in the menus.

Starry Night opens to your default location and “now”.

This document provides a quick reference for how to perform common tasks such as changing the date and time. See the Document “Doing More in Starry Night” for details on other tasks, like changing you location or changing the appearance of the screen.

Common Tasks

Date and time

Time Flow

Location

Appearance

Moving Around

Finding Things

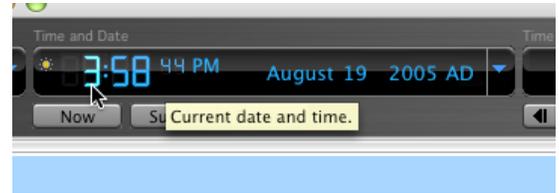
Opening files

Date and time

The Date and time controls are on the left side of the toolbar labeled Time and Date.

Set Date & Time

To change the time or date, click on the item you want to change and type a new time or date. However you must use the arrow keys to change the month.



Go to NOW or special times

To return to now, or to go to sunset or sunrise click the appropriate button below the Time and Date box.

You can also use the drop down menu on the right side of the box, which gives a few more special time options.

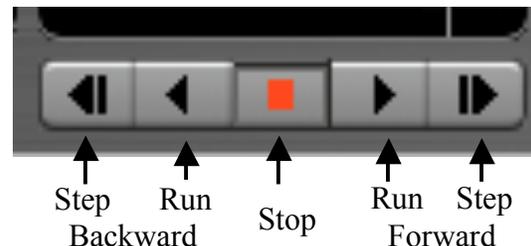


Time Flow

The time flow control is just to the right of the Time and Date control in the toolbar. The default is to run forward in real time.

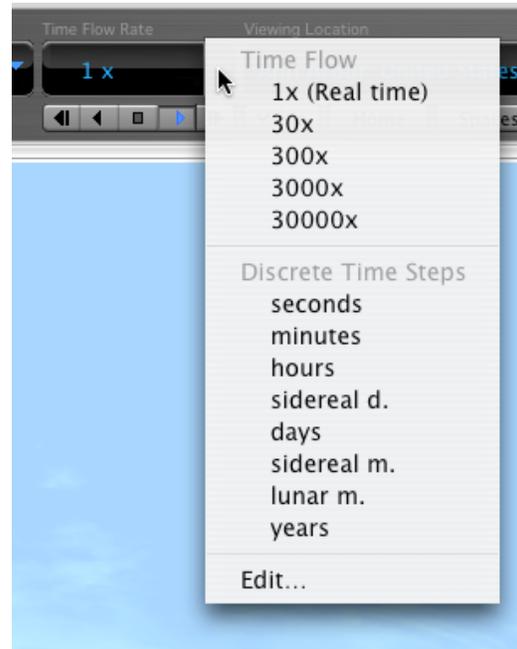
Stop and start

The buttons under the box work just like the controls of a CD or DVD player:



Change Interval

How big a step or how fast time runs depends on the interval. To change the flow or the type of step, (e.g. minutes or days) use the drop down menu.



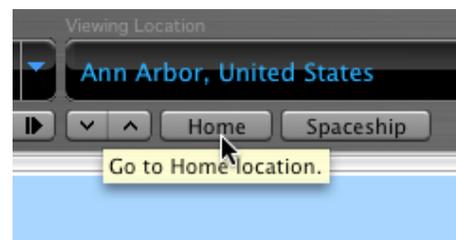
To change the size of the interval, click the number and type a new number



Location

Home

Starry Night starts at your home location by default (Ann Arbor). If you need to get back there, simply click the “Home” button on the toolbar.



You can view from other locations as well, using the drop down menu accessed from the right side of the location box. See “Doing More in Starry Night” for details.

Appearance

Names

You can get the name of an object by “pointing” at it: place the index finger of the hand pointer over the object. The hand will turn into a pointer.

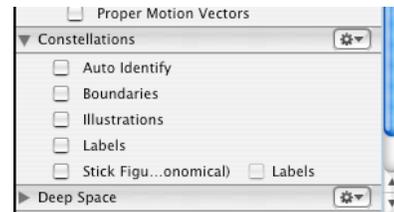


Alternatively you can have Starry Night identify everything on the screen. Select “Show All Labels” from the “Labels” menu or hit <shift> + <command (apple)> + <d> on the keyboard.

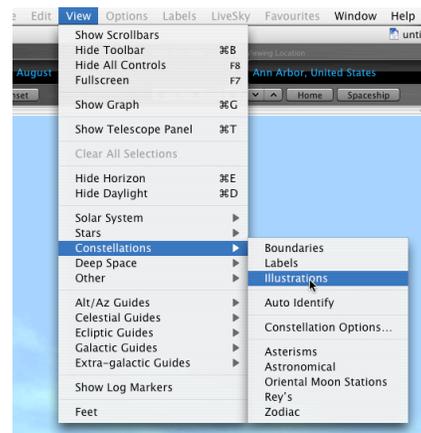


Constellations

You can have Starry Night display Illustrations, Stick Figures, boundaries, and names of constellations from the “Constellations” layer of the “Options” pane. Click the appropriate check box. Auto identify turns on the label and illustration of the constellation at the center of the screen.

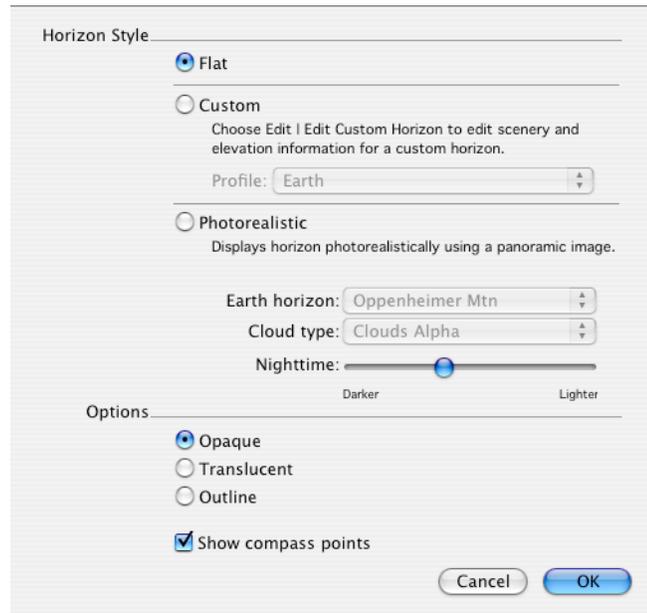
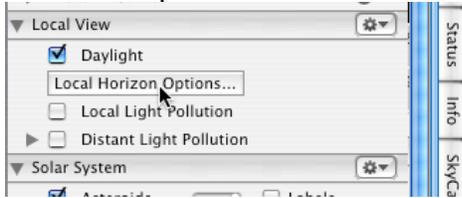
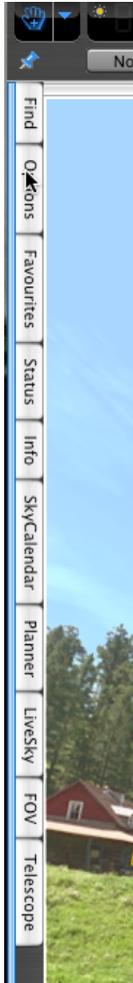


You can also turn these things on from the View Menu. Note that having the illustrations on may slow the program down.



Horizon

The default horizon is a photorealistic horizon with obstructions (trees, buildings, etc). You can get a flat horizon by clicking the “Options” pane and selecting “Local Horizon (some name)”. It will change to say “Local Horizon Options” when you hold the mouse over it. Click “Flat” in the dialogue box that opens.



Moving Around

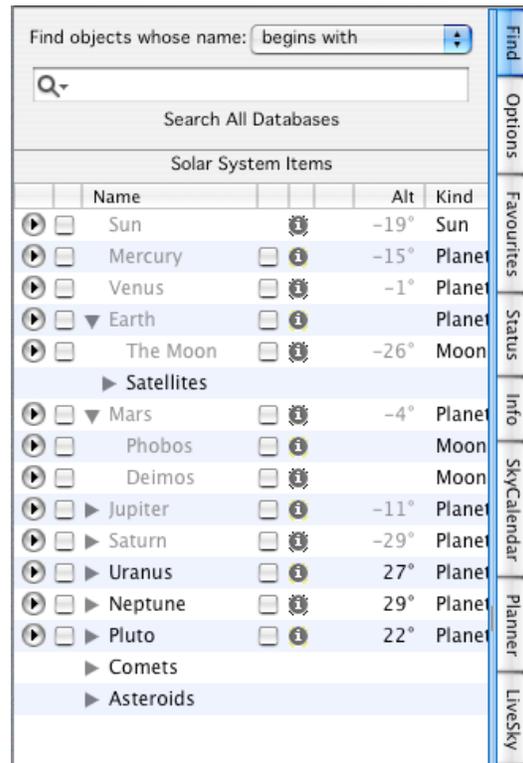
For short distances, simply click and drag. Make sure you do not have an object selected (the information drop down should NOT be visible)

To turn to face a particular direction, type the first letter of the direction: N for north, S for south, E for east, W for west, and Z for zenith

Finding things

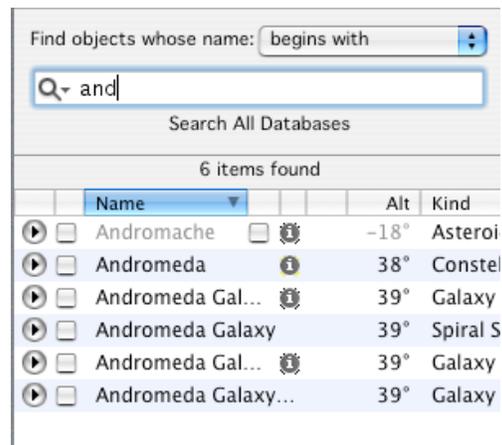
Solar System Objects

If you open the “Find” pane you will see all major solar system objects listed. The ones visible for your viewing time and date are bold. You can access natural and artificial satellites by clicking the arrow next to an object to expand the list. In the example, the list for Mars is expanded and the two natural satellites are listed, but they are not currently visible.



| | Name | | Alt | Kind |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sun | | -19° | Sun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mercury | | -15° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Venus | | -1° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Earth | | | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The Moon | | -26° | Moon |
| | ▶ Satellites | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Mars | | -4° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Phobos | | | Moon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Deimos | | | Moon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Jupiter | | -11° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Saturn | | -29° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Uranus | | 27° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Neptune | | 29° | Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ▶ Pluto | | 22° | Planet |
| | ▶ Comets | | | |
| | ▶ Asteroids | | | |

You can find other objects by typing the name in the box at the top. Again, Objects that are visible for your selected time and location are bold. In this example, the asteroid Andromache is 18° below the horizon so it's grey.

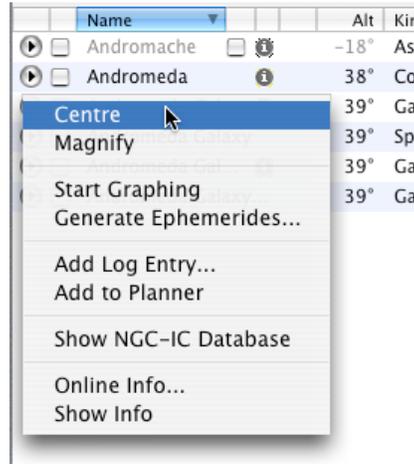
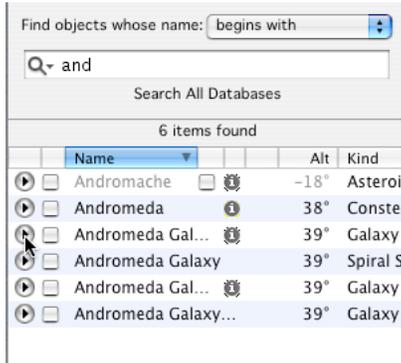


| | Name | | Alt | Kind |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--|------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromache | | -18° | Asteroid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromeda | | 38° | Constellation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromeda Gal... | | 39° | Galaxy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromeda Galaxy | | 39° | Spiral Galaxy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromeda Gal... | | 39° | Galaxy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Andromeda Galaxy... | | 39° | Galaxy |

Some objects (like the Andromeda Galaxy) have multiple listings because it has an entry in multiple data bases. Generally, there is little difference between the listings.

To mark the object, click the box next to it.

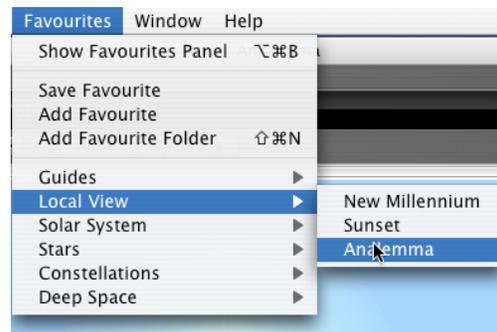
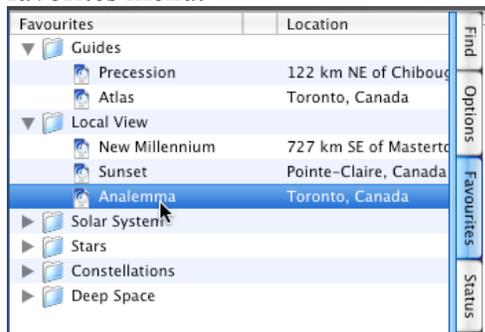
To center on the object, click the arrow, then select “center” from the drop down menu.



Opening Files

To open a file, you must know its name and location. You can either double click on the file from the Finder (e.g. double click the icon on the desktop) or choose File > Open from Starry Night. If you choose File > Open, you may need to browse to the file.

Programs that go with the Starry Night Companion Book or that go with a lab may be listed under “Favorites”. To open these, click the “favorites” pane or choose the favorites menu.



To open the companion book, go to Help > Companion Book.

