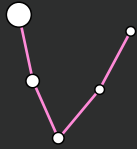




Many have not knowingly seen this fascinating sight

Zodiacal Light

Aldebaran



Hyades

Pleiades



- Best seen in the west in February and March 75-150 minutes after sunset.
- Often mistaken for a late continuation of the darkening evening twilight
- View from a dark location, away from city lights with no bright moon present.

In February and March, the wide cone of the **Zodiacal Light** stretches as high as 45°, reaching or passing the Pleiades. As the evening advances, the cone descends, eventually setting along the western horizon.

- A subdued, hazy glow in the shape of a cone or a pyramid.
- Hugs the ecliptic.
- The **Zodiacal Band**, a dimmer extension of the Zodiacal Light, stretches all along the ecliptic.
- The **Gegenschein** is a very subtle brightening at the anti-solar point on the ecliptic. Its diameter is 5-10°. It is caused by back reflected sunlight off interplanetary dust.

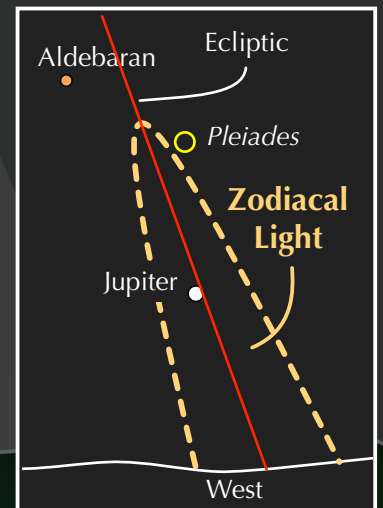
Best viewed with no optical aid!

Zodiacal Light also occurs in the eastern pre-dawn sky and is called the "False Dawn." It is most noticeable in September and October.

Jupiter
(Feb/Mar 2024)

ARIES

West



What causes the Zodiacal Light?

It is caused by sunlight scattered off fine dust particles concentrated near the plane of the solar system. The diameters of the particles range from millimeter size to micron. The dust is believed to have originated from comets beyond Jupiter's orbit and from emanations from Mars.