Messier 41

The Little Beehive Cluster

Messier 41

NGC 2287

Type: Open Cluster

Constellation: Canis Major

RA: 06h47.0m

Dec: -20º44’

Magnitude: 4.5

Dimensions: 38’

Distance: 2,300 light-years

Photo: Hubble Space Telescope

Discovered By: Giovanni Batista Hodierna, before 1654, or perhaps Aristotle

Messier 41

Covering an area in the sky about the same size as the full moon, this cluster is actually about 25 light-years in diameter.

It has about 100 stars including a handful of red giants.

At about 190 million years old, this cluster is estimated to have a lifetime of 500 million years before the galactic tides cause it to dissolve.

Photo: Mathieu Guinot
@Telescope Live

Finding Messier 41 - February Evenings

Located between the ‘legs’ of Canis Major, about 4 degrees south of Sirius.

What does Messier 41 look like?

Naked Eye:

A large fuzzy patch south of Sirius.

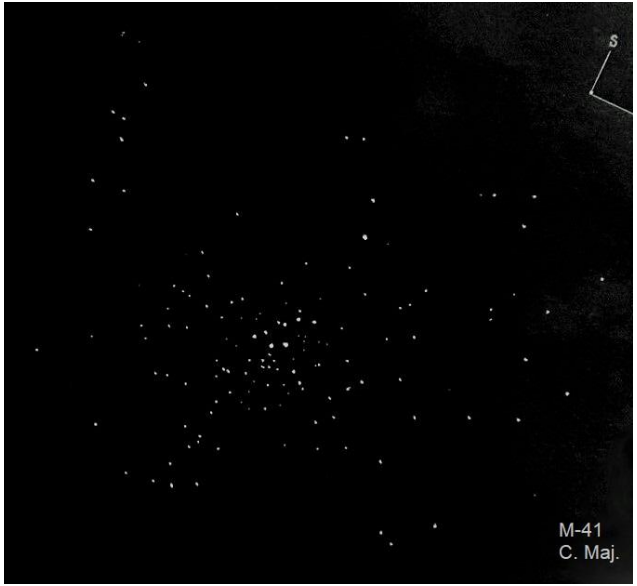
Binoculars:

Irregular white-grey glow with granular texture, Sirius and Nu Canis Majoris in same field of view.

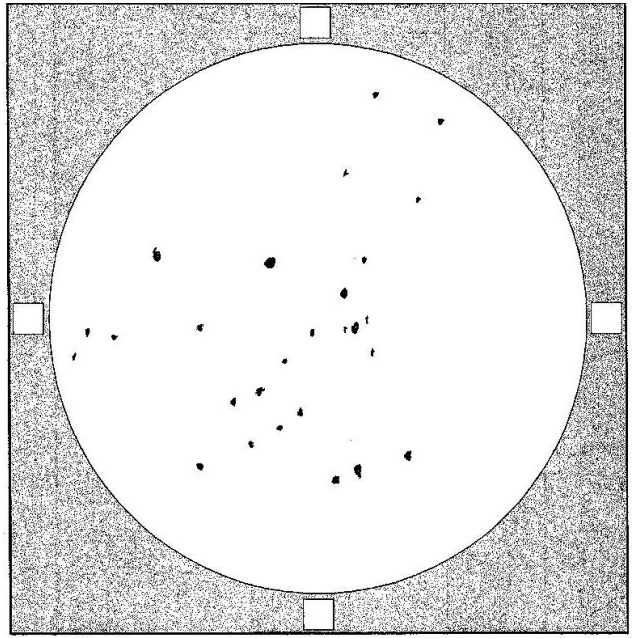
Small Telescope:

Rich but sparse cluster with different star colours. A 6.5mag red giant star near the centre of the cluster. Many people see prominent curves of stars. To me, it looks like two wings spread - O'Meara sees it as a fruit bat.

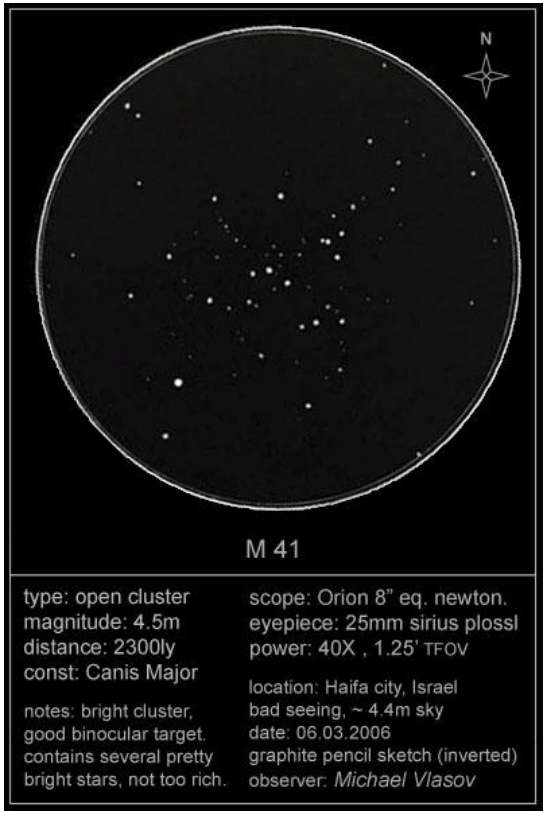
Sketches of Messier 41



Cseh Victor
130mm Newtonian EQ @24x



Michael Wright
114mm Newtonian EQ @53x
March 13, 2018



Michael Vlasov
200mm Newtonian @40x

References

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Stephen James O’Meara. 2014. The Messier Objects. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press.

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