



MUSÉUMS **NATURE** MONTRÉAL

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **Montréal's Nature Museums Invite Everyone to Observe the Perseids, the Moon and Jupiter at the Îles-de-Boucherville Park**

*Montréal, July 29, 2009* – The faithful Perseids return every year to brighten up the August skies and delight stargazers. To mark the International Year of Astronomy, the Planetarium is inviting everyone to come out to the Îles-de-Boucherville Park on August 11 and 12, starting at 9 p.m. both evenings. Planetarium staff and members of the Boucherville-Montérégie amateur astronomers club will be on hand to point out the shooting stars, which will be at their most numerous on those dates, and help everyone observe the Moon and Jupiter, too!

### **Tips for observing the Perseids**

Peak activity for the Perseids is expected to be around 2 p.m. Eastern time, on August 12. That means, unfortunately, that North American observers will completely miss out on the hours when the meteor shower is at its most intense.

The best time to observe the Perseids will be during the short hour of complete darkness just after sunset, at about 9:30 p.m., and just before moonrise (about 10 p.m. on **August 11, and 10:30 p.m. on August 12**). Between the end of astronomical twilight and moonrise, you can expect to spot about fifteen meteors an hour, in a moderately dark sky.

You can also see a few Perseids in the nights preceding and following the peak period from August 10 to 13. In theory, the Perseids are visible from late July to the third week of August.

### **Stargazing at the Îles-de-Boucherville Park**

The Moon and Jupiter will be clearly visible, more so than the meteorites, and are sure to steal the show! Observers will be able to see them up close thanks to the telescopes and explanations by astronomers from the Planetarium and the Boucherville-Montérégie amateur astronomers club who will be on hand. If the sky is overcast, other activities will be held.

The Planetarium is celebrating **the International Year of Astronomy** through a series of immersive and interactive activities to mark the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of a telescope. The Planetarium team is also sharing their enthusiasm for the starry sky with the public in other green spaces and at other Montréal events, and presenting lectures by renowned guest speakers.



## The Perseids

Meteor is the proper term for these particles, no bigger than a grain of sand, that enter our atmosphere at speeds of over 200,000 km/h and become so hot on contact with the air that they vaporize. The heated air lights up in a long, fiery trail that we call a “shooting star.”

The dust that produces the Perseids comes from comet Swift-Tuttle. The Earth passes through this cloud of debris once a year, around August 12, so we can always look forward to the show at about the same date. The Perseids are so called because they appear to originate in the Perseus constellation.

### ***Some tips for observing the Perseids***

- Don't bother with binoculars or a telescope, as their field of vision is too small. Your eyes are the best instrument. Set the back of your lawn chair at a 45° angle, let your gaze wander across the sky, about halfway above the horizon.
- Don't look at other sources of light; they could spoil your night vision.
- Warm clothing is preferable, and bring along some hot chocolate and a ground sheet to keep off the dew. August nights can be cool and damp.
- Finally, remember to bring along your wish list!

More information on the Perseids:

[http://www.planetarium.montreal.qc.ca/Information/Dossiers/Perseides/index\\_a.html](http://www.planetarium.montreal.qc.ca/Information/Dossiers/Perseides/index_a.html)

*Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium – helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.*

### **General information:**

**Îles-de-Boucherville Park  
Near the parking lot and chalet  
August 11 and 12, from 9 p.m. to midnight**

Montréal Planetarium: Tel.: 514 872-4530 • [www.museumsnature.ca](http://www.museumsnature.ca)

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