

Meteor showers forecast

Annual meteor showers such as the multi-coloured Geminids occur when the Earth passes through debris left behind by a comet. Most of these fragments are the size of a grain of sand and burn up in the atmosphere as “shooting stars”, while larger objects – meteorites – crash to earth

Meteor, travelling at about 70km/s, can hit satellite with power of .22 calibre bullet, exploding into small cloud of charged plasma capable of knocking out electronics

Orbits around sun

Quadrantids

Geminids

Earth

Sun

Mars

Asteroid belt:
Most on stable, elliptical orbits between Mars and Jupiter

WATCHING THE SKIES

Quadrantids Jan 1-5

Up to 120 per hour

Entry velocity: **41km/s**

Origin: Believed to be asteroid **2003 EH1**

Orbit of sun: **5.5 years**

Geminids Dec 7-17

Up to 120 per hour

35km/s

Asteroid/comet **3200 Phaeton**

1.4 years

Polaris
Ursa Minor

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

Ursa Major

Gemini

Cancer

Leo

Hydra

N

E