



Uranus is the ancient Greek God of the Heavens - the earliest supreme god. He was the father of Cronus (also known as Saturn in Roman mythology) and of the Cyclopes and Titans (predecessors of the Olympian gods). This is the symbol for Uranus:



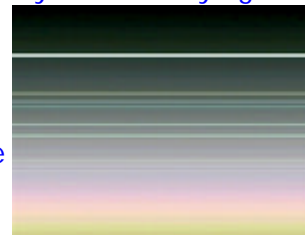
Uranus is the seventh planet from the Sun and the third largest of the nine planets (in size). Uranus is larger in size but smaller in weight than Neptune.

Like the other gas planets, Uranus has bands of clouds that blow around rapidly. Uranus' bands are very, very faint. They can only be seen with special treatment of pictures obtained by the Voyager 2 spacecraft. Here are examples of what Uranus looks like before and after image enhancement.



Uranus' blue color is the result of a gas called "methane" found in the planet's upper atmosphere. Uranus may have colored bands like Jupiter's, but they are hidden from view by the overlaying methane layer.

Like the other gas planets, Uranus has rings. Uranus' rings are very dark like Jupiter's rings. The rings are made up of fairly large particles ranging up to 10 meters across in addition to fine dust - much like the rings of Saturn. There are 11 known rings, all are very faint. Uranus' brightest ring is known as the "Epsilon" ring.



**Look for Uranus!** Uranus is sometimes just barely visible with the naked eye on a very clear night; it is fairly easy to spot with binoculars (if you know exactly where to look). A small astronomical telescope will show a small disk.

- ~ Uranus is a giant gas planet which is made up of mostly rock and various ices.
- ~ Uranus has been visited by only one spacecraft, Voyager 2 on Jan 24 1986.
- ~ Uranus spins differently from most planets. It seems to be tilted "sideways" instead of right-side up. At the time of Voyager 2's passage, Uranus' south pole was pointed almost directly at the Sun.
- ~ Uranus has 15 known moons. Voyager 2 discovered 10 small moons in addition to the 5 large ones already known. It is likely that there are many more tiny moons within the rings.