

Learning Constellations

The following collection of charts is designed to make it easier to learn constellations. Think of the brightest stars as major road intersections. Once you know the intersections, it is easier to learn the local streets and byways (the fainter stars in constellations). In the charts, prominent and/or well-known stars or groups of stars, constellations, or super-constellations are used to point to other prominent stars. Once a prominent star is found, other charts can be used to identify other stars in a constellation until the full constellation is recognized.

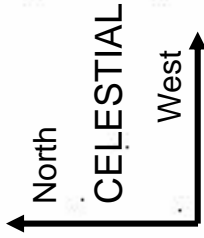
These charts are useful over large areas of Earth's northern and southern hemispheres. They place a significant fraction of a celestial hemisphere on a small, flat piece of paper. Use separations between recognized stars (especially those paired to make "pointers" to gauge the distance to the desired target star. In the northern hemisphere, April-June, the **BIG DIPPER** asterism (part of the constellation **URSA MAJOR**) visible high in the north is particularly good for learning the sky. **ORION** is good from October-December in the southern hemisphere and January-March in the northern hemisphere. Though the charts are labeled to indicate a hemisphere, many of the stars will be visible from the opposing hemisphere, depending on your latitude.

As a general rule, facing south is best but some neck-craning (and/or facing a different direction and rotating the chart) will be necessary to go from the starting point to the target stars at the ends of the arrows. The font convention for the charts is that **CONSTELLATIONS** are fully capitalized and **Star Names** are larger and first-letter capitalized. Celestial North and West refer to the direction to those points on the horizon as seen on the sky. (In other words, east and west on the sky and on the charts are reversed compared to maps of features on Earth). Most important: Pick something familiar and go from there!

Clear skies,

Stephen Edberg

Capella



AURIGA

Castor

Pollux

GEMINI

TAURUS

Aldebaran

CANIS MINOR

Procyon

Betelgeuse

ORION

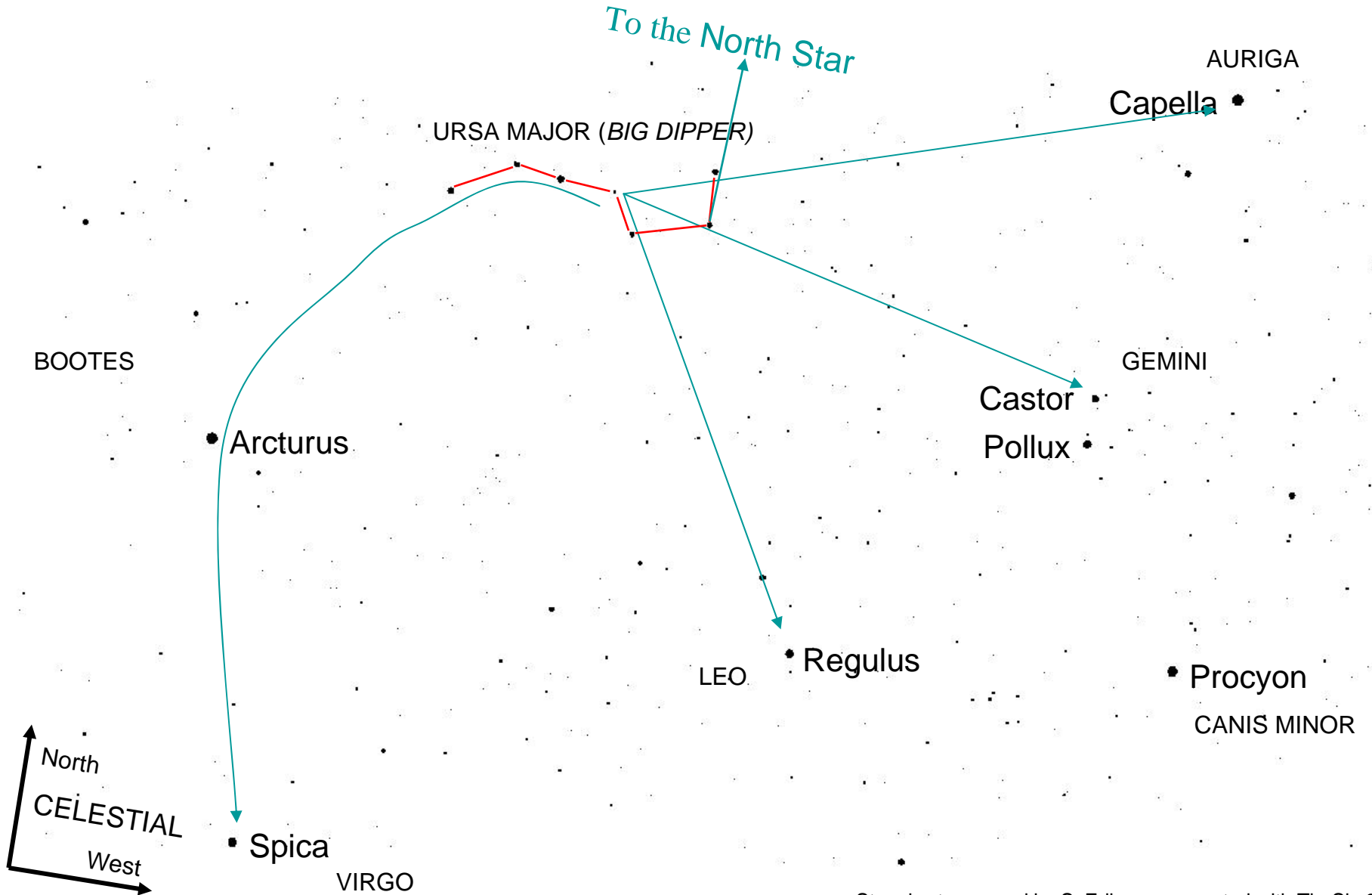
Rigel

Sirius

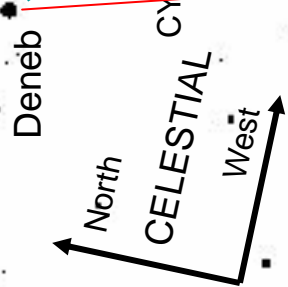
CANIS MAJOR

Equatorial Stars, January-March

Mostly Northern Stars, April-June



To the North Star
SUMMER TRIANGLE



Deneb

CYGNUS

Vega

LYRA

AQUILA

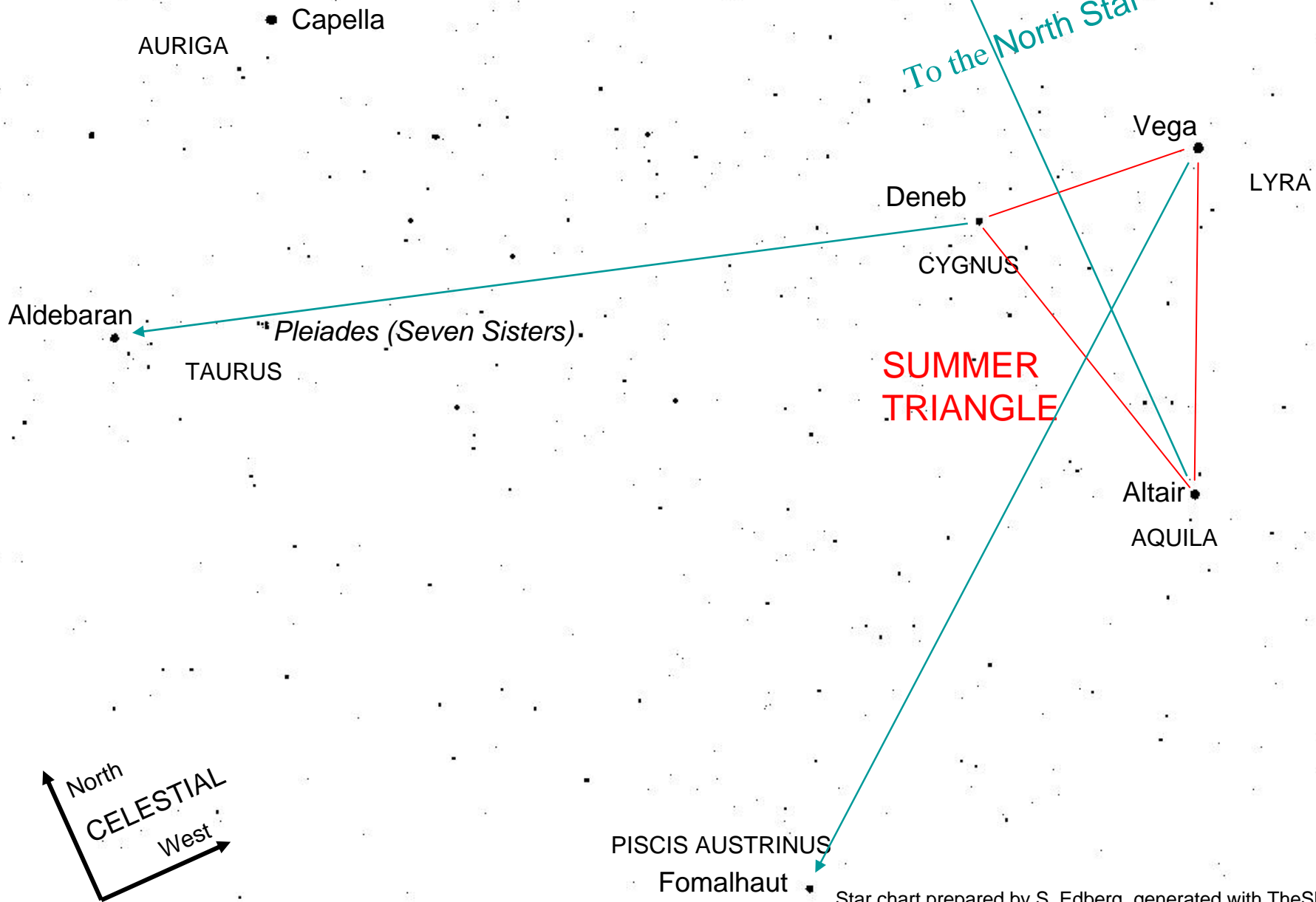
Altair

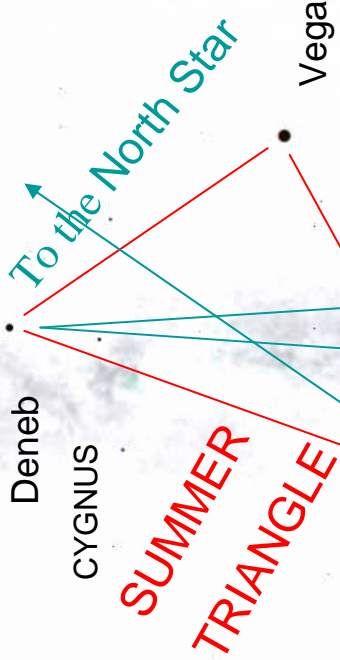
Antares

SCORPIUS

Mostly Northern Stars, July-September

Mostly Northern Stars, October-December





Deneb

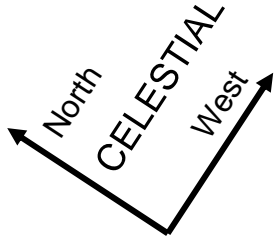
CYGNUS

Vega

LYRA

Altair

AQUILA



Antares

SCORPIUS

Alpha Centauri

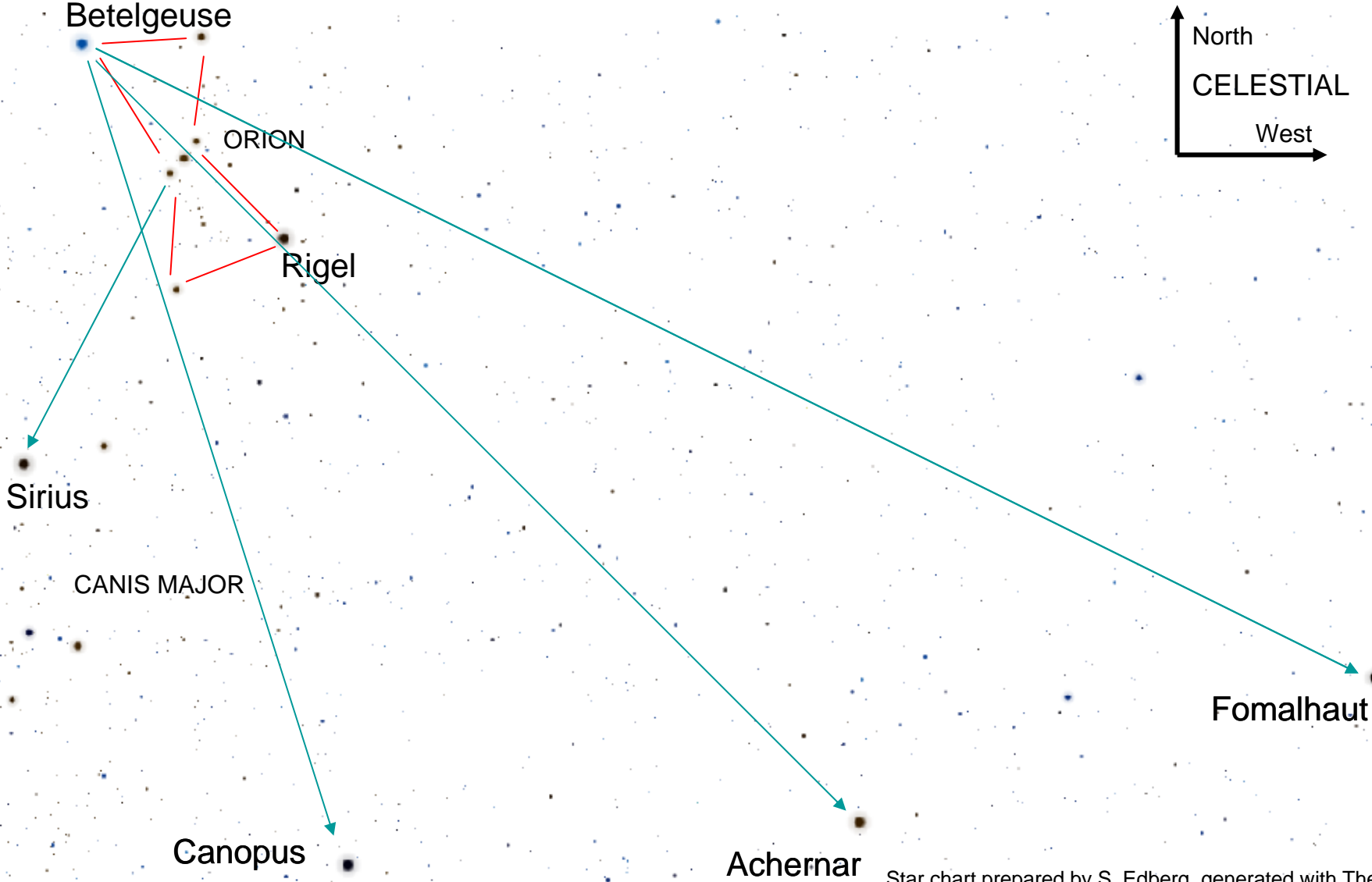
Beta Centauri

Northern & Southern Stars, September-October Evenings



CRUX (SOUTHERN CROSS)

Equatorial & Southern Stars, October-December



Star chart prepared by S. Edberg, generated with TheSky6
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Southern Stars, April-June

