

## A Quick Guide to the Variable Star Plotter

If you know the star's name, type it here. Search [vsx.aavso.org](http://vsx.aavso.org) for a list of all stars known to VSP.

Every chart is plotted with a **chart id** in the upper right hand corner. This should be reported with your variable star observation. If you would like to replot a lost chart, just type in the chart id here and the chart will be replicated using all the settings you used to plot it the first time. This can also be used to see what charts other people are using to make their own observations.

If you do not know the star's name you can use a set of celestial coordinates in epoch 2000.

The title is a word or phrase you'd like displayed at the top of the chart. If left blank, what you placed in the *name* field will be used.

What you type in here will be printed at the bottom of the chart.

If you are familiar with the older AAVSO charts, then you can use this setting to replicate their dimensions. In general, charts become smaller as the letters increase.

This is the chart's field of view in arc minutes.

This is the limiting magnitude for the field, stars fainter than this will not be plotted.

This refers to the size of the chart as seen on your computer screen. A resolution of 75 dpi is the default value for most web pages. Higher resolution will give you better quality, but larger images that may be too large to fit on a printed page.

This is where you set the orientation of the field to match what you see in the eyepiece.

By default, a black and white chart will be drawn with circles representing stars. If you would prefer to have a real picture of the sky instead, choose this and a picture from the Digitized Sky Survey will be plotted instead.

If you are a CCD or PEP observer, you may want access to precise photometry of the comparison stars. Check this box to plot a table of multicolor photometry instead of a star chart.

Sometimes, more than one variable star can be found within a field. If you would like these other variables shown on the chart, check these boxes. GCVS variables tend to be the more well known variables. If you check *all* you will also get many new and suspected variable stars. The field could get crowded!

### VARIABLE STAR PLOTTER

**WHAT IS THIS?**  
The Variable Star Plotter (VSP) is the AAVSO's online chart plotting program that dynamically plots star charts for any location on the sky, or for any named object currently in the Variable Star Index (VSX). By creating charts this way, every chart utilizes the most current data available. Through the use of unique Chart IDs generated by the Variable Star Plotter, one user can plot a chart, and another user in different part of the world can plot an identical chart by simply using the same Chart ID. The Variable Star Plotter is the tool you should use to create any chart that you would like to use.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**  
By entering an object name or its coordinates on the sky, the Variable Star Plotter can produce a star chart for that object or location, and tailor it to your specific observing requirements. Many different parameters are adjustable via this interface, allowing you to get the perfect chart for the job. Customizable field of view, print resolution, magnitude limit, and orientation can be set for any chart plotted, or these values can be auto-assigned by selecting from one of the legacy chart scales familiar to many of our long-time observers. The charts produced by this tool include comparison star sequences for visual magnitude estimations.

**HOW CAN I GET HELP?**  
We have two help guides available for the Variable Star Plotter in Portable Document Format (PDF). These documents may be read using the free Adobe Reader program. The One-page Help Guide is a concise reference sheet for the VSP interface, and the Detailed Help Guide is a more in-depth narrative on how to use this tool. If you need further assistance, [contact us](#).

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CHART ID...**  
**WHAT IS THE NAME, DESIGNATION, OR AUID OF THE OBJECT?**  
*Required if no coordinates are provided below*

**OR, IF YOU HAVE A CHART ID...**  
**WHAT IS THE ID FOR THE CHART YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLOT?**  
*Providing a Chart ID will override all other input on this form*

**ALTERNATIVELY, WHAT IS THE LOCATION OF THE OBJECT?**  
*Required if no name is provided above*  
 **RIGHT ASCENSION**  
 **DECLINATION**

**WHAT WILL THE TITLE FOR THIS CHART BE?**  
*Displayed at the top-center of the chart*

**WHAT COMMENTS SHOULD BE DISPLAYED ON THE CHART?**  
*Displayed beneath the chart star field*

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE A LEGACY CHART SCALE?**  
*Automates below values according to legacy chart scales*

7.5	<b>FIELD OF VIEW *</b>
20.5	<b>MAGNITUDE LIMIT *</b>
75	<b>RESOLUTION *</b>

**ALTERNATIVELY, WHAT VALUES WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE?**

**WHAT NORTH-SOUTH ORIENTATION WOULD YOU LIKE?**  
 North Up     North Down

**WHAT EAST-WEST ORIENTATION WOULD YOU LIKE?**  
 East Right     East Left

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO DISPLAY A DSS IMAGE ON THE CHART?**  
*If Yes, retrieves and displays an image from the Digitized Sky Survey*  
 No     Yes

**WOULD YOU LIKE JUST THE FIELD PHOTOMETRY?**  
*If Yes, does not plot a chart, and provides table of photometry only*  
 No     Yes

**WHAT OTHER VARIABLE STARS SHOULD BE MARKED?**  
 None  
 GCVS only  
 All

**PLOT CHART**