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### Scientists Warn Of Most Intense Meteor Storm Since

From: [Stig Agermose@online.pol.dk=20](mailto:Stig_Agermose@online.pol.dk=20)  
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 1998 03:25:40 +0200  
Fwd Date: Sun, 12 Jul 1998 12:07:40 -0400  
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>From the BBC. URL:

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Stig

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Wednesday, June 10, 1998 Published at 11:26 GMT 12:26 UK

Sci/Tech

Scientists warn of meteor storm

(Image: Hubble Space Telescope will be turned away)

Astronomers and satellite operators are preparing for the most intense bombardment by meteors since 1966. Our science correspondent David Whitehouse reports.

The Leonid meteor swarm, so called because it appears to come from the constellation of Leo, strikes the Earth every November.

Most years it isn't very noticeable. But every 33 years or so it can produce a storm. And the next storm is predicted later this year or in 1999.

According to scientists at the meeting of the American Astronomical Society in San Diego, the cosmic blizzard could disable satellites in Earth orbit.

It could also provide a spectacular shooting star show for skygazers.

(Image: The Leonid storm)

There are about a dozen major meteor showers each year, the most famous being the Perseids in August.

The meteors are tiny grains of dust shed from a comet. The Leonids come from Comet Temple-Tuttle.

Satellite operators are preparing plans to protect their satellites. The Hubble Space Telescope will be pointed away from the direction of

the meteors, the space shuttle will not be in space at the time and many satellites will be turned so that sensitive areas are protected.

(Image: Lynch: storm could sandblast satellites)

According to Dr David Lynch of the Aerospace Corporation in California thousands of flecks of dust could 'sandblast' many satellites during the two-hour blizzard. Some satellites could be damaged.

While the storm is a headache for satellite engineers, astronomers are planning a series of airborne observations to find out as much about the Leonids as possible.

#### Relevant Stories

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\*The Leonids

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