



ETX SITE LIVE FORUM

December 2012



I have been asked many times over the years to start an online user forum. I have been using the [Livefyre](#) "comments system" since mid-March 2012 as a "reader comments" section on my [Cassiopeia Observatory](#) reports. In April 2012, a new "Live Forum" was added to the ETX Site. Livefyre has many nice capabilities and it is currently free (for the features I use). If you have any problems with the comments system please [Email Me](#).

The Live Forum is unmoderated and all comments will appear immediately when a user posts them. I will change that only if it becomes necessary. You can reply to existing comments or start a new comment. Please limit entries to the same topics as you would for email to me. This first "Live Forum" will be for any discussions on those topics. I have no intention to replace existing forums ([ETXAstro Yahoo Group](#), [Cloudy Nights](#), etc.), so feel free to use those as alternatives.

The Forum page will be archived at the end of each month and will be available on the [Forum Archive](#).

43 comments 11 people listening



mweasner



Following

Post to

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kmoorlag

Hello, I have an ETX-60, and when I look at Jupiter with a 9mm or 6mm eyepiece, I can focus it so it is nice and sharp, and I can see the visible Jovian Moons. However, Jupiter is a bright white disk, no definition, no belts. Am I expecting too much from this scope, or do I just need a certain filter? Any advice would be appreciated.

41 MINUTES AGO



mweasner 6 pts

The ETX-60 is a short focal length telescope. You will want closer to about 100X to view planets better. Keep in mind that the ETX-60 has a theoretical maximum magnification of about 120X so 100X will be getting close to that. As you get close to the max or exceed it, objects will tend to get less sharp. You could use a Moon Filter to reduce the glare from Jupiter's bright disk, which can help a lot in seeing cloud bands. If

you don't have a Moon Filter wear sunglasses. The other filters which can enhance cloud bands but their use on the small refractor won't help much.

34 MINUTES AGO

Like Reply



kmoorlag

mweasner

Thanks for the quick reply. I have a moon filter, which I have tried. Perhaps the seeing wasn't so good that evening. Would a fringe killer or very very light yellow help at all? I know most filters are for bigger aperture scopes.

29 MINUTES AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

Yes, seeing conditions will dramatically affect visible details. For info on different types of filters, see the Accessory Reviews: Filters page. A light yellow filter will have little noticeable effect on this small telescope. A fringe filter can help, especially on bright objects like Jupiter, IF the fringing is blurring out details.

23 MINUTES AGO

Like Reply



kmoorlag

mweasner

Thanks again, for the invaluable advice.

All the best for the New Year.

Cheers

LESS THAN A MINUTE AGO

Like Reply



scottwalk

Hello, I found an ETX 125PE with UHTC that looks like it's never been used...are there any things I should look for before buying? A Cloudy Nights review I read mentioned a Motor Unit Fault error...is this common? Can I check for it somehow? Is it expensive to fix? Is it fixable since Meade no longer makes this model? Otherwise, it looks like a great deal at \$550 including the 4000 series eyepiece set and case and field tripod.

Is the field tripod from Meade solid? I have an ETX 80 that is in my opinion, kind of cheaply constructed and the tripod is already broken.

I plan to do some lunar and planetary photography with my Canon 40D...is that realistic?

Lots of questions...thanks!

1 DAY AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

MUF can occur from many causes: obstruction preventing movement, bad circuit board, bad motor, corrupted

AutoStar software. Only way to find out is to work through troubleshooting steps. Fix can be simple or hard. Cost can be free or a few hundred dollars, depending on what is wrong and how you decide to fix it. The #884 tripod is a good tripod, especially if you don't raise it to full height (true of most tripods). You can see many examples of ETX astrophotography on the Helpful Information: Astrophotography Gallery Archive on the ETX Site.

1 DAY AGO

Like Reply



scottwalk 5 pts

mweasner

Sounds like I'll need to set it up and use it. I'm pretty sold on it at the price and accessories offered. I'll try to get a 30 day return in writing so I can just check it out first hand.

Thanks for the reply!

1 DAY AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

@scottwalk Good luck. If necessary, check the articles on the Helpful Information: Telescope Tech Tips page and the Helpful Information: AutoStar Info page.

1 DAY AGO

Like Reply



gtt08 5 pts

Hi Folks. I have an early model Meade ETX Astronomical Telescope Produce #35614-03-01, MFR# 980715. It has a 6.7MM eyepiece, #932 45 Erect Image roof prism, #07210, and a Series 4000 SP26MMLP Eyepiece. Made in the US, it is in new condition in the original box and booklet. I am considering selling it. Do any of you know how I can find out the value? My email address is gtt08@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks

Dave

3 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

gtt08

I assume this is the original ETX Astro Telescope (now known as the ETX-90RA) without the handcontroller. You can check eBay for possible prices. I've seen good ones sell for \$250 and up.

3 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



gtt08 5 pts

mweasner

Thanks mweasner. It is the ETX-90RA without the hand controller...it is like new. I have been looking at ebay but haven't found anything yet...I'll keep looking. Thanks again.

3 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



EdwardMH 5 pts

Looking for suggestions on where to retire (buy home) with dark skies warm weather low humidity, low crime, low cost of living...other than the moon with a space heater. I wish I could afford to move to a astronomy community like New Mexico skies but that's about \$300,000 and I will be lucky to get a loan on \$175,000

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

EdwardMH We love it where we live in southern Arizona. Low cost, dark skies, low humidity (normally), low crime (away from the Mexico border and smuggling paths). Contact me via email to learn more.

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



EdwardMH 5 pts

mweasner E-mail sent

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



EdwardMH 5 pts

I know the must haves are 12v positive center 5.5mm male plug but after that I get confused I have seen post suggesting 1000-2000 mA 1500 mA preferred, 1-2 amp 1.5 preferred and there is the Meade Universal adapter that provides 5 amp 12 volt DC output with a peak 7.5 amp rating. I was hoping to head to radio shack and just pick one up but with such a range of differences what's my best overall choice? Yet another post says to only get a Power pack as it is already 12v rated and safer than using a home's wall outlet. Please help a poor easily confused newbie before he loses his hair or mind. Edward Henry May your skies be dark and your visions bright

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

EdwardMH Amperage required depends on the model. Typically 12VDC 1500 mA (same as 1.5A). Keep in mind that there is no fuse protection in the ETX (or many telescopes). If you have AC available, then using a reliable adapter (such as from ScopeStuff.com) is OK. If you don't always have AC, then getting a 12 VDC 5A is a better choice. Charge it up and you are ready for many nights observing. I use a Celestron PowerTank with my ETX-125AT and it works fine. (See my review on the Accessory Reviews: Miscellaneous page.) For more on power supplies, see the Helpful Information: Telescope Tech Tips page.

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



EdwardMH 5 pts

mweasner Thanks, I used to have a Celestron Power Tank sadly I lost it when I could not afford to pay for my storage shed fees. I was just hoping for a temporary power option at home till I could afford a new pack. Could I use a radioshack adapter but splice a fuse in-line or is this a waste?

5 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

EdwardMH

Many people have successfully used a RS adapter. Adding a fuse may or may not help prevent problems. Keep in mind that any DIY power solutions (or even ones from reliable manufacturers) run the risk of frying your telescope electronics. If you are looking for a simple temporary solution, consider using the internal batteries, even rechargeable ones (which typically don't last as long as non-rechargeable internal batteries).

5 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



GMo 5 pts

Thanks a lot.

6 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



GMo 5 pts

Hi all. Just got my hands a brand new ETX 125 properly (I hope) mounted. As a professional astronomer, every telescope I've ever used (ranging from 6 mm to 8.3 meter diameter) has been first carefully balanced for best tracking performance. That's not the case with the ETX which is definitely top heavy. I do not see any obvious way to balance it, nor there is any mention about balancing in the manual. Any insight for this naive beginner? Thanks.

6 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

GMo

Yes, the ETX is aperture heavy. Designed that way. Just don't over-tighten the Altitude axis lock, otherwise you risk damaging the lock mechanism. You can add a counterweight system. Lots of counterweight tips on the Helpful Information: Astrophotography page.

6 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



TheLivster 5 pts

Hi all. I have had many telescopes but am new to the 'Goto' tech. I have recently bought a used ETX 80-AT with 494. After battery change I have received 'Proc Trap 2' on the handset. I know you have a lot of related info here about Autostar 494 and I have trawled through most of it. I have managed to install and setup usb-serial adapter and have connected all as per the manual to my PC. I cannot get my PC to connect to allow me to update the software via ASU!! Should the telescope be switched on or off to transfer, I have tried both, and should the backlight on the handset come on or remain off when AUX connected, again I have seen both. I believe all cables etc to be original and in working order from the previous owner.

I would appreciate guidance, even it is just to point me in the right direction to an appropriate link.

Thanks for reading,

Stressed.com

12 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

TheLivster

The #494 is NOT user update-able. Even using the #506 serial cable (not easily made, unlike the #505 serial cable for the #497 AutoStar) won't let you install a fresh copy of the software. With the cable you MIGHT be able to force a RESET of the AutoStar, which MIGHT clear the error (but probably not). Since the Proc Trap 2 error occurred after a battery change, I would suggest checking the batteries; are they all inserted correctly? If so, try different batteries. If you can get to the menu item, be certain to do a CALIBRATE MOTOR.

11 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



WBeckerson 5 pts

I own an ETX-90EC and really enjoy this scope until the recent horizontal movement failure. I disassembled the scope tube from the arms and found the movement post end (Plastic) had worn away as well as the gear end post (plastic as well). The worm gear is fine and rotates the gear post but the connection has worn away. Is there somewhere to obtain these parts? If there is I can't find it on-line. Please help ... I would love to be able to use the scope like it should be used.

14 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

WBeckerson

You might try Telescope Warehouse (link on the Astronomy Links page). You might have to buy a complete base.

11 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



RossBendigonean

Thanks for the advice. Yep I've tried it with the external battery lead and another external power supply, and checked polarities. Putting the multi-meter on the internal pins doesn't show any voltage on the red or blacks where it logically should be, so I tended to think that there may be a broken trace or the switch may be stuck open. The person I bought it from had it from new and never used the handset or autostar, just aimed it manually, and not much of that either. I may do a bit more rummaging around with the meter on the little board before I get violent with it.

24 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

Keep us posted.

24 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



RossBendigonean

Actually I lie...I've just re-read /etx/techtips/2004/batterywires.html where dr Clay mentions that it's a glue and press in and can't be removed, which seems damn silly from a maintenance viewpoint, but what can you do?? I'd still be interested in anyone's experience in breaking it free.

24 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply

RossBendigonean



Thanks for the reply. Yep I've trolled through all those articles but none show how to get the panel out; there's probably some really simple trick to it but I don't really want to put too much pressure on it or too many screwdriver scrapes.

24 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

The battery cutoff switch is just one possible culprit. There can be many reasons why the telescope won't power on, including fried components on the circuit board. Be certain you rule out other sources of the problem before removing things that don't need to be removed. Have you checked the battery compartment for corrosion or broken wires? Have you tried an external 12VDC power source? (If an external source was used with the wrong polarity, that would damage the ETX.)

24 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



RossBendigonean

Help please! I've just acquired an ETX-90 which looks like its had very little use, but won't power on. I've read that there may be problems with the switch on the dc input socket not disconnecting, but for the life of me I can't work out how the small Computer Control board comes out of the housing. I've got the gearbox and worm gear out and the main board loose, but that damned little board looks like it's held in with moulded tags at the top, and it can't go down or back at the bottom. I'm lost! Has anyone removed this board and give me a clue?

24 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

There are a couple of battery articles (cutoff switch and broken wires) on the Helpful Information: Telescope Tech Tips page that might help. They don't discuss HOW to remove the control panel but have other possibly helpful information for you.

24 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



kmoorlag

Hello all, I own an ETX-60, and I have the opportunity to buy an ETX-80 with a busted mount. My quick question is, can I swap the 80mm OTA over to the 60mm fork mount? I understand the difference in diameter between the two scopes, but where the tube meets the forks, is there a size difference? Having never put my hands on an ETX-80, I would appreciate comments from someone who might own both scopes, or who has contemplated this before.

26 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

@kmoorlag Although not exactly what you need, see the article "Putting an ETX-90 OTA in ETX-70AT forks" on the Helpful Information: Telescope Tech Tips page.

26 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



kmoorlag

mweasner

kmoorlag

I will check it out, many thanks.

26 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



Soundlogic 5 pts

Thanks for the good advise. I do not take the complexity of this scope lightly, therefore I plan on doing just as you say. I presume this may take awhile with all the up-coming holiday commitments. Suffice to say, I am really looking forward to sinking my brain and teeth into what this scope has to offer. Right now I am researching on just how to be able to make the included Rikaline GPS 6010 compatible with my Macbook Pro laptop using OS 10.6 Snow Leopard...not sure if I have the proper drivers. Is the Rikaline an included item, or an aftermarket? and is it necessary for proper use?

28 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

Soundlogic GPS drivers are not included with Mac OS X. If it is a RS-232 serial device, you will need a USB-serial adapter. Since you will likely want one that works with the AutoStar as well, I suggest getting a Keyspan USB-serial adapter. Other adapters may or may not work reliably with the AutoStar (from any OS).

28 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



Soundlogic 5 pts

A51;

I really feel very fortunate for this purchase. Timing was everything, as I sat down on my exercycle Friday morning with my iPad to do more telescope research, I directed myself to Craigslist and seen the freshly posted ad for the ETX. After several minutes of reading reviews on Amazon.com, and seeing what used ones were selling for, this became a no-brainer purchase. As fate would have it, both my wife and I came down with the flu that night and we have both been hit hard, so have not had a chance to set-up the scope yet. I did manage to print the instruction manual, since that seems to be the only thing missing per the seller's knowledge(the scope belonged to his father, and the seller did not know much about it.) I just got through assessing the included accessories: I have a Meade #932 45 degree Erect Image Roof Prism eyepiece...I think this is what you were referring to on Ebay ...a #126 2X Telenegeative Barlow, a#905 Variable Polarizing filter, a Meade super Plossl LP multi-coated, what appears to be the SLR/DSLR camera adapter (one of my want items...now...have) and a Minolta mount...which I will gladly trade for a Nikon mount. All and all, this seems like a very complete package, and now that I have printed the manual, I hope to be up and using soon. Thanks for the congrats. Any other info/advise is always welcome

Tim

28 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



mweasner 6 pts

@Soundlogic Get comfortable using the ETX visually before starting Astrophotography. Read the manual, 3 times. Play with the telescope indoors to learn it. Once ready to start Astrophotography, see the Helpful Information: Astrophotography page on the ETX Site.

28 DAYS AGO

Like

Reply



A51 5 pts

Tim, lucky you. I live in Spokane Valley and obviously missed it since he replied that it was sold. Congrats!!!
There is currently a 45 erect prism on eBay for \$40 and free shipping. Enjoy!

30 DAYS AGO

Like Reply



Soundlogic 5 pts

Hello forum members; My name is Tim, from Hayden ID., and I just became the proud owner of a used ETX 125 today. I found it on Craigslist this morning, along with the tripod w/soft-case, hard-case and assortment of lenses and filters, I have yet to itemize. It cost me all of \$150.00 US dollars. I started out a few weeks ago thinking I would just buy the Celestron 130EQ at Costco for \$150.00 and after such poopy reviews on the finder and mount of that scope, I started doing more research. low and behold, as if an angel was watching over me, I found the ETX 125 today! And it is in mint condition as best as I can tell. It did not include an owner's manual, but I see...thanks to this wonderful site...it is readily available. My wife and I can hardly wait to play around with this bad boy. We live on the edge of a lake, so my question to the forum members: Can this scope accept a right angle, 45 degree eyepiece that allows for terrestrial viewing? Thanks in advance for any comments.

Tim

1 MONTH AGO

Like Reply



mweasner 6 pts

Soundlogic

Enjoy the ETX! And glad you like the ETX Site. If you can find one, check out the Meade 45-Degree Erecting Prism. I have a short review at <http://www.weasner.com/etx/misc.html#45prism> from a long time ago.

1 MONTH AGO

Like Reply

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