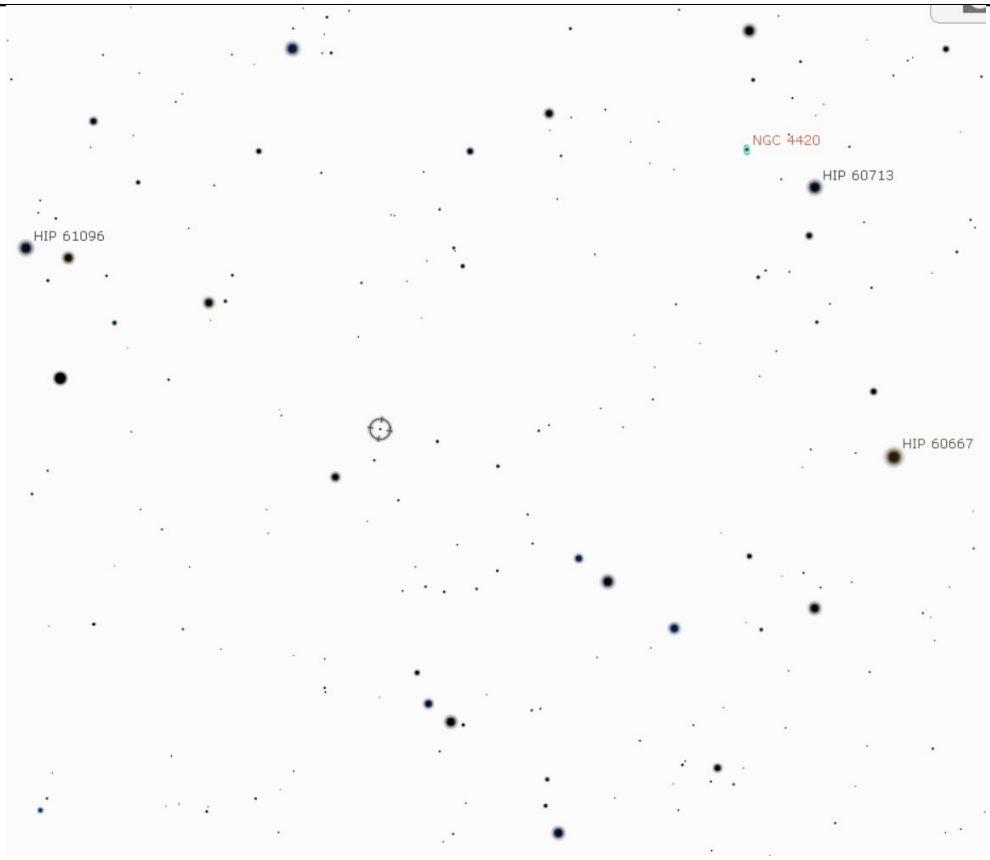
3C273



Quick Facts:

Distance: 2.4 billion light-years. Size: 200,000 light-years (jets).
Constellation: Virgo.

The first quasi-stellar object discovered (1963) and the brightest. In the heart of a giant elliptical galaxy and outshining it, the quasar is a supermassive black hole and its jets. Of great importance to our current understanding of galaxies, black holes and cosmology, this is an extremely luminous object (a trillion or more suns) at an enormous distance. An 8-inch scope or larger is needed, as it's about 13th mag. It will probably be the most faraway thing you will ever observe.

GOTO: Use the GOTO RA-DEC function in UTILITIES with the coordinates 12h29m.1, +02°03. HIP 60667 (right) is brightest star (7th magnitude) in the approx 1-degree square finder chart. North is up.

Image Stellarium. Quick reference card by Derek Wallentinsen.