



Dynamic Duo



Much like when we get too warm in the summer months and wish to take off our extra layers of clothes, planets also shed the outer layers of their atmosphere when they get too hot! Using a large telescope in the Chilean desert, astronomers have found clues of a giant planet that is doing just that!

But this is no ordinary planet.

This planet is unique, because it is the first giant planet to be orbiting a special type of star known as a white dwarf.

When a Sun-like star has burned up all its fuel, it begins to collapse inwards. The material in the star's core ends up squashed tightly down into a tiny, heavy ball. This ball is called a white dwarf star. The star also loses its outer shells of gas, which float off into space.

This peculiar planet - white dwarf pair may hint at what our own Solar System might look like in the distant future. Eventually, our Sun will also become a small white dwarf star.

Image credit: ESO/M. Kornmesser

COOL FACT



White dwarfs are among the oldest objects in Universe since they are the end point in the life cycle of most stars (including our Sun!)



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