All settings – detailed guide

Show

- Intense mode – a render mode good for busy frames with lots going on
- Detail mode – more subtle, better for empty skies
- Light only – just show what is being added to the frame
- Frame only – just show the original frame NB if a track matte is applied, this is removed.

Sun preset

Choose a preset from the list. You can then modify this in the advanced sun menu at the bottom. If you change your mind at any point hit UNDO repeatedly to go back to prior settings.

Leak preset

Choose a preset from the list. You can then modify this in the advanced Leak menu

Color preset

Choose a preset from the list. You can then modify this in the color controls (there are also color tint controls in the advanced leak menu) Usually best to try to choose a color scheme that blends / looks realistic for the original image

Get sun location from

- Track mask – if you want to attach the sun position to a tracked bit of scenery (like a tree or mountain or cloud in the distance) you can track a small section of the object, then select this to be the layer track mask. Then select this option.
- Position control – set the sun's positions from the control beneath:

Sun position control

If you have a stationary frame or wish to control the position of the sun, use this cross hairs to set position, after selecting the option from the setting above. NB The sun will sill fade in at out at the frame edges, adjustable in the advanced sun menu.

Fine tune intensity

Set the overall brightness of the effect. This will affect all added light. If you don't want to use the Master twinkle amount (below) or want to add extra twinkling / variation to the light, you can animate this value.

Sun master size

Set the overall size of the sun.

Twinkle reacts to :

- Cam settings – the rays of the sun and overall brightness will be detected from the image, movement and objects around the current sun's position, and the plugin will attempt to automatically "read" the frame. This works well with camera moves if it is uneven, or large objects in the frame. + Speed – different speeds are selectable + Steady - the steady options make the flickering / twinkle more steady and less jittery.

- Rand settings – the rays of the sun and overall brightness will be set from a random algorithm, designed to emulate light through trees / clouds. + Speed – different speeds are selectable + Steady - the steady options make the flickering / twinkle more steady and less jittery.

Master twinkle amount

Sets the overall amount of flickering of the light, or "twinkling" of the sun. This will in turn affect the light getting through to the light leaks, which have additional variation on them.

- Twinkle always makes the light dimmer, never brighter. This is so that you can set twinkle to 0 and see the max brightness in the frame.

- A higher twinkle value means more dipping of the light, so in general the light will be less bright.

- Negative values invert the random values of the twinkle algorithm. The light will always be dimmer though the more twinkle you put on.

Hi / Med / Lo color

Set the overall color palette. NB there is another tin function available for the leaks in the advanced leaks section.
If is not usually necessary to have a Mid value. As usual starting with a pre-set in the ballpark you want is usually a good idea. Usually it is also good to start with something that looks realistic / matches the existing image, unless you are going on an avant garde hallucinogenic odyssey.

Leaks intensity

Set the brightness of the light leaks. This will only affect the leaks, and is always relative to the sun brightness. The leaks automatically vary slightly automatically in addition to the main sun twinkle, however If you want extra flicker in the light leak, you can animate this value if you like to bring in extra flicker. You can set the extra leaks flicker in the advanced leaks section at the bottom also – see below.

Lens smudges intensity

Set the brightness of the lens smudges. The lens smudges are reactive, and only show when there is some light from the light leaks or sun in the frame. Use this value to set how visible they are. It usually a good idea to set them just slightly fainter than the level that makes them obvious. They show up more in plain skies and empty frames.

Advanced sun controls

Sun posn X tweak / Y tweak

If you are using a track mask to set the position of the sun (for instance a tree in the distance) you can use these controls to move the sun's position in the frame, whilst keeping it tracking.

Sun types

There are lots of sun types, and they all react slightly differently. Have a play! As well as cascading light through misty glades there are normal 6 blade aperture ones.

Middle size

The size of the dense middle part of the sun, relative to the whole sun.

Middle intensity

The brightness of the dense middle part of the sun, relative to the whole sun.

Haze size

The size of the larger haze part of the sun, relative to the whole sun. If you can't see it, set thetop Show control to "Light only" to see it clearly.

Haze intensity

The brightness of the larger haze part of the sun, relative to the whole sun.

Arrange rays

The rearrange the current sun's rays – vary this SLOWLY to get an arrangement you like. Many sun types have rays that evolve over time so it is a good idea to set this on your most important or brightest frame.

Ray count

You can set how many rays the sun has here. 6, 8 and 12 are realistic for common lenses, but you don't have to stick with that, 7 looks nice to me. There are lots or rays at the far end for more photographic looks.

Rays length

The length of the rays, relative to the whole sun.

Ray width

- Width setting.

- Also has streaky ray options. These auto-animate as the sun or frame moves for greater realism.

Rays intensity

The brightness of the rays, relative to the whole sun.

Master rotate

Spin the sun round until it exactly looks the way you want it you godlike control freak.

Middle is oval

Deform the sun middle slightly on the X or Y axis to mimic lens distortion / heat effects.

Middle twinkle amount

Sets the amount of flickering/twinkling of the sun middle,relative to the overall twinkling amount set at the top master twinkle control.

Rays twinkle amount

Has two settings Sets the amount of flickering/twinkling of the rays,relative to the overall twinkling amount set at the top master twinkle control.

- Positive values – rays twinkle independently.

- Negative values – all rays twinkle together as one, slaved to the middle twinkle amount.

Middle twinkle randomizer

You can set the value here to have different random twinkling patterns, if you have the top control Twinkle reacts to : set to a RND setting.

Fade sun at edge

The sun automatically fades in and out at the edges of the frame. You can set this to 0 to stop this happening here, or set higher values to have a more gradual fade in as the sun position nears the centre of the frame.

Advanced leaks controls

Leaks skew (at bottom)
Skew control to tilt the leaks – affects all leak element on screen

Leaks extra random twinkle (at bottom)
Controls how much extra the light leaks twinkle, added onto the sun twinkle.

General – the 3 leak elements on screen :
There are 3 leak elements you can position on the screen. These 3 elements can be repositioned using the cross hairs visible on the screen. If you are using After Effects, there is a second set of cross hairs position controls visible on screen – these can be used to quickly resize or flip the elements.

Leak type
There are 8 different fuzzy elements to choose from, ranging from dense or hazy circles to random clouds of blobs and edges of frame bitmaps.

Hi / Med / Lo color

- If only one is set on the top set (LEAK1) colors, this is used as a master leak tint from the sun color.

- If more than 1 color is filled in (eg Hi + Lo) this is taken as a range, and is independent of the sun color.

- There is also a tint color for Leaks 2 and 3, so you can have the elements having different colors if you want to.

Intensity
This is the element brightness relative to the overall leaks intensity

Position
This is the element position on screen. This can be animated if you are feeling adventurous.

Height/Width
This is the element size on screen. In After Effects this is also linked to a Size control that shows as a cross hairs control on the screen for quick resizing.