

Dennis McFarlane

## FlyZone Uberlites

*Several flying choices are offered all from one power module.*

The idea behind the FlyZone Uberlites is not a new one. Many years ago another company (I forget the name) had a series of glow-powered airplanes that used a common power module. The motor, fuel tank and servos, along with all the radio equipment like the receiver and batteries, were part of a common “backbone.” When it was time for a pilot to change airframes—due to wanting to fly a different design or perhaps a sudden and unexpected contact with the ground—all he had to do was transfer the power “backbone” to the new airframe. Pushrods still needed connecting and a number of small adjustments were always required, but for its time it was a rather unique idea in radio control modeling. The concept never really caught on, but it was one of the first attempts at using a common power module for different models.

FlyZone has brought the concept back with the release of its Uberlites airplanes. With today’s ultra small and lightweight motors, servos and receivers, the design is now completely practical, especially for aficionados of ultra small and lightweight radio control models.

Two Uberlites come packaged in one box, which is brightly colored and shows both models, a red-and-



black monoplane and a blue-and-yellow biplane. The inner box is molded foam, the industry standard for ultra-light indoor models, and holds the airplanes securely, preventing any damage during shipment or transport to a flying site. Besides the two airframes, the box contains the power module, transmitter, AA batteries for the transmitter plus a very tiny 65 mAh lithium battery for the power module and a charger for the

flight battery. A very unique feature of the flight battery charger is that it uses a standard USB port for its power source. Not only can you charge the flight battery from the USB port on the transmitter, but the charger can also be used with any device (like a laptop computer) that contains a USB port.

The heart of the Uberlites system is the power module. It consists of a tiny brushed motor driving a carbon propeller via a gear drive. The power module also con-

tains the combination ESC and 2.4 GHz receiver, two magnetically actuated servos and two sub-pushrods, one attached to each servo, as well as the landing gear.

Preparing either of the Uberlites for flight is about as easy as it could be. Pick out either the monoplane or biplane and center the power module on the front of



*Two complete airframes are contained in one box, allowing the purchaser to select between a monoplane or the biplane (shown).*



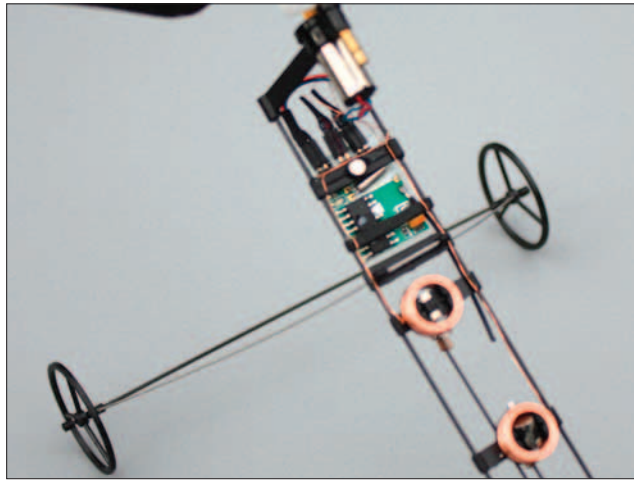
### Features

- Everything needed to fly is contained in one box.
- Two complete airframes are included.
- A separate standard power module flies both airframes.
- The charger is powered through a standard USB port.
- An advanced “wing” platform is available as skills improve.

the airframe desired. As it is lowered into position, there is a definite tug and a reassuring snap. Two magnets hold the power module to the airframe, and two of the tiniest magnets I've ever used attach the rudder and elevator pushrods to the power module.

As previously mentioned the flight battery is quite small, but instead of having to fumble with thin wires and micro connectors, you just line the battery up with the battery tray and once again, "snap." The positive and negative terminals are made from magnets. Life with micro airframes has just been made a whole lot easier.

Flying either model is a whole lot of fun. Both airframes are an exercise in weight reduction, and both models weigh about the same. The single wing of the monoplane has roughly the same area as the two wings of the biplane. Since I am a fan of biplanes I will say the biplane flies better, but honestly, I really can't tell any significant difference. Flown either indoors or outside (in zero wind), they both just laze around in the sky. There are trims provided on the transmitter, but those select



*The heart of the Uberlites is the separate power module that contains the motor, receiver, ESC and two magnetically actuated servos.*

few who I've let fly this airplane (I really like this airplane system, it's not been the typical pass-around-the-transmitter-and-beat-it-up review subject) have not found a need for trim adjustment. The slightest breeze either indoors or outside causes the airplane to change altitude and direction, so trimming for straight and level flight is rather redundant.

The outdoor photos were taken during the Northern Illinois Radio Control Helicopter Association Fun-Fly, which took place in late summer. The evening sky had cooled, but there was still plenty of residual heat retained in the ground. Test pilot Larry Stevens got the



*Both airplanes contrast well with the sky and fly incredibly well outdoors, provided there's no wind, requiring only a minimum of space to safely maneuver.*

Uberlites monoplane stuck in a thermal, and I was starting to get really nervous as the Uberlites continued to climb, even with full down elevator and full left rudder. Thankfully Larry broke free of the thermal and, to my relief, he was able to bring the little airplane in for a safe landing.

Locally the indoor season is now in full swing, and Uberlites have proven to be extremely popular. The Uberlites, like all FlyZone products, are available through Great Planes Distributors. **HM**

## Uberlites Wing Airframe



Although I thoroughly enjoy flying the two stock Uberlites, younger or more aggressive pilots might find themselves getting bored just poking holes in the sky. As a solution to this problem, FlyZone offers an economical add-on. The flying wing uses the same power module as the stock airframes, so there are no extras needed. Considering its size and light wing loading, the wing is extremely aerobatic. The wing utilizes elevons (elevator and aileron sharing the same control surface), which requires electronic mixing. To solve this, FlyZone has incorporated a knob on the transmitter that is simply rotated left or right until the proper mixing for the airframe style selected is dialed in. The instructions are very clear on how to do this, but I found it a little difficult to master. I suppose the only explanation is in the old

phrase, "so easy, it's hard." Regardless, once the idiosyncrasies of the wing are sorted out, not only can it fly in any indoor arena, but it can also fly in a very limited amount of space, like one's office or residence. This opens entirely new sales opportunities for dealers of radio control airplanes. **HM**