

CARING FOR YOUR AIRSHIP (SAFETY AND STORAGE)

Some Cautions to take with your airship

- **Do not fly outdoors**, you will only have one flight! The saucer is very sensitive to the slightest breeze and thermal activity. Outdoor flying will allow the saucer to get away. If you must fly outdoors, tether the saucer to the ground with a length of string or lightweight fishing line.
- **Do not** fly over halogen lamps or other heat sources, they are very hot and tend to melt plastic and may start fires.
- **Do not** fly near lit candles or stoves, for obvious fire hazard reasons.
- **DO NOT** ALLOW THE SAUCER TO FLOAT AROUND THE HOUSE UNATTENDED. ALWAYS TETHER YOUR SAUCER TO THE GROUND AFTER YOU ARE FINISHED FLYING.

Storage

When you are finished flying the saucer, switch the Turbofan to the "OFF" position - no sense draining your batteries overnight! tie it down with the antenna or add ballast so that it cannot run into fire hazards such as halogen lights, stoves, candles, open flames etc. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If you follow this instruction manual carefully, you should not have problems with your Tri-Turbofan powered Saucer or Blimp, however we have provided this troubleshooting list to help you along with enjoying your airship.

1. The red light (LED) on the turbofan or transmitter does not light up

- Check make sure that the 9 volt battery has been inserted correctly.
 - check the on/off switch on the Tri-Turbofan or transmitter and make sure that you have it switched on.
 - make sure your batteries are not dead
- ### 2. I have inflated the balloon, attached the turbofan unit with cellophane tape, but the blimp still wants to rise, and it won't come down!
- Hopefully you are indoors! Add some ballast weight to achieve neutral bouyancy, check your instructions again regarding Ballast.
 - add a small piece of the included plasticine putty to the balloon. You may also tape a penny or a metal washer to the saucer for weight. Let the saucer go free for a second and observe it. If it is still rising, then grab it before it gets away, and add more putty in small amounts until the saucer achieves neutral bouyancy.

3. My airship worked fine for many weeks, I added extra helium to keep it full, but now it doesn't have enough lift to get it off the ground even though the balloon is full.

- this is most likely due to stale air that has entered the balloon. Helium is required for lift, and if you are topping the saucer up from time to time, after many weeks of doing this, the helium inside the balloon may become mixed with regular air. There is a simple solution for this problem:
- Take a small plastic straw and carefully insert it 6 inches into the balloon through the self sealing valve, and gently squeeze the balloon to slowly deflate the balloon, this should take about 5 minutes. After the balloon has been deflated, it can be folded up for storage, or it can once again be filled with helium for more flying action!

4. I took my saucer outside to try it out, and it worked great for a few minutes, but then it got away and I lost it!

- The Remote Controlled flying saucer is intended for INDOOR usage only, you run the risk of losing it if you fly it outside. At least you can take satisfaction in knowing that you have allowed the saucer to return to its mother planet.

5. When I push both transmitter sticks forwards, the blimp goes straight ahead for a while, then it starts to turn! Is one of the motors defective? I was expecting the saucer to fly in a straight line.

- This is completely normal. Variations in the air surrounding the airship will alter the intended course, and this requires modulation of the controls by the pilot! It is certainly possible to fly a straight course with the saucer or blimp, however we cannot always expect the craft to fly as if it were on rails. When flying the saucer, you will have to pretend that you are on board the saucer looking out, and manipulate the control sticks according to how you want the saucer to fly. In general pushing the control sticks forwards will result in forward motion of the saucer, but to fly in a perfectly straight line will often require the pilot to make continuous small adjustments of thrust by using the transmitter control sticks concurrently.

6. When I use the transmitter, the motors of the Tri-Turbofan unit cut in and out, and do not respond properly to my controls.

- There are a few situations which can cause this:
- check to make sure that your batteries are fresh, when the batteries start to get old and die out, this cutting in and out of the motors will occur
- turn the Tri-Turbofan power switch off, then turn the transmitter switch off. Now both units are turned off. Next turn on the Transmitter **first**, and **then** turn on the Tri-Turbofan receiver. This will allow the receiver to synchronize to the signal put out by the transmitter.
- make sure that the batteries have good contact.
- extend the antenna (black wire) of the Tri-Turbofan unit completely.
- you may have radio interference near you, try moving a few feet over, or try using the saucer in an area without radio interference.

7. My saucer flew fine a few days ago, but now it won't lift off the ground!

- Helium seepage has occurred, this is normal.
- remove some of the ballast putty (plasticine), until the saucer has achieved neutral bouyancy again.
- If the balloon is sagging a bit, then you can also add some helium
- If the saucer has been filled many times, it may contain stale air as well as helium. Deflate the balloon completely and refill with fresh helium as per instructions and redo the ballast settings.

8. My saucer balloon is leaking!

- You can patch a small hole in the balloon with cellophane (scotch) tape.
- If you have a gaping hole in the balloon, you may require a replacement balloon.
- If you have damaged the self sealing valve of the balloon by improperly inflating the balloon, you can roll up the tail end of the balloon and seal it temporarily with cellophane tape.

To Re-Order Spare Balloons or Batteries call your Local Dealer or Plantraco Direct at:

1-306-955-1836

World Wide Web at:
www.plantraco.com
www.microblimp.com
email us at:
ufoman@plantraco.com



Congratulations on your purchase of one of the most unique remote controlled flying machines ever!

There is nothing like the feeling you get when you fly a radio controlled aircraft, and with Plantraco's Tri-Turbofan powered airships, you can do it all indoors - in the comfort of your own home!

Miniature micromotors, micro electronics and ultralight plastics, make this Dream Machine a Reality!

We are certain that your saucer will provide you with many hours of enjoyment.

You are about to enter a whole new world of indoor radio controlled flying!

PACKING LIST

- One metalized nylon balloon (Blimp Shape or Saucer Shape)
- One Set of Styrofoam Fins (Included with Blimp Balloon Only)
- One Radio Control Transmitter
- One Tri-Turbofan Gondola
- One small piece of plasticine putty (used as a Ballast weight)
- One Instruction Manual (you are holding this now!)



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ASSEMBLY

Inserting Batteries

Transmitter

Remove the rectangular battery cover from the back of the Transmitter. Insert a 9 volt alkaline battery, taking care to insert the battery with proper polarity of positive and negative contacts. A small diagram inside the transmitter battery compartment will assist you in inserting the battery with proper polarity.

Receiver (Tri-Turbofan Unit)

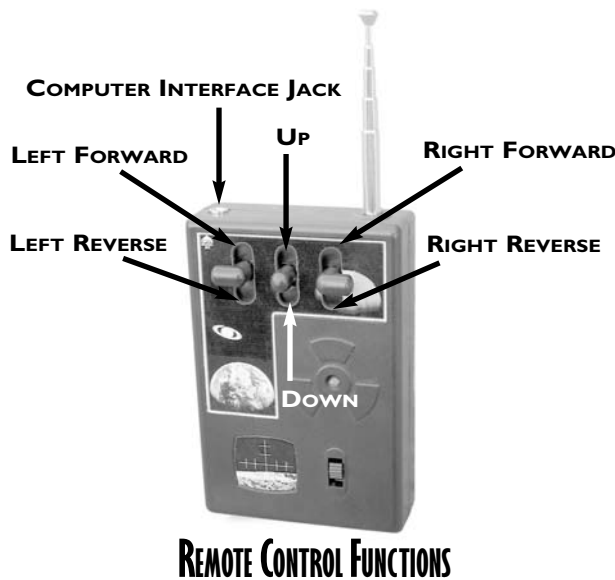
Towards the rear of the Tri-Turbofan unit you will see a small battery socket. This is where you will insert the 3 Volt Lithium battery (Duracell DL123A). Insert the battery noting the polarity, (+) & (-), markings in the battery socket.

Testing Transmitter and Receiver

Multi-Channel Operation

This radio control set operates on one of 4 channels in the 27MHz frequency range. Your unit will be on one of the 4 channels. These channels are designated by letter A, B, C, or D and a coloured dot affixed to the Transmitter Box and the Tri-Turbofan Receiver. Your transmitter will only control a Tri-Turbofan that is running on the same channel as the transmitter. These 4 channels allow more than one saucer to fly simultaneously in the same room! Get your friends together with their saucer and fly together! The possibilities for aerial racing and other aerial radio controlled sports are endless!

Channel **A** - Red Dot
Channel **B** - Orange Dot
Channel **C** - Green Dot
Channel **D** - Blue Dot



Controls

The Radio Control Transmitter allows you to independently control the three propellers of the Tri-Turbofan airship. Two of the propellers are situated on the left and right and one propeller is located in the middle for vertical ascent and descent.

Three Control Sticks independently control the three micromotor powered propellers. The middle stick is used to control the direction of the central propeller and is used to control your vertical ascent and descent. The other 2 sticks control the left and right propellers respectively.

Testing

The Tri-Turbofan is powered by Three high performance electric micromotors. The motors are ultra-quiet, high rpm, and fully reversible.

Test the Multicontroller Transmitter by turning on the switch on the front of the transmitter. The red LED (light emitting diode) will glow indicating that all is well. The black wire on the Tri-Turbofan is the receiver antenna and should be allowed to hang freely from the airship. It can also be used to tether the airship after use.

Now turn on the power switch of the Tri-Turbofan.

- Push both transmitter sticks forward, and both turbofans should be spinning and thrusting in the same direction.
- While holding one stick forward, pull the other stick backwards and notice that the corresponding turbofan will reverse its direction.
- Pull both sticks backwards, and both turbofans are thrusting in reverse.
- The middle stick controls the middle propeller. This center fan allows you to fly your saucer vertically Up and Down!
- Note that if the transmitter is turned off, the propellers of the Tri-Turbofan propellers may spin randomly to indicate that the turbofan unit is still turned on. This random spinning of the propellers will remind you to turn your turbofan off after you are finished flying. See to it that you turn the Tri-Turbofan gondola OFF to save batteries when not in use!

BALLOON INFLATION

The metallized nylon balloon supplied with the remote controlled flying saucer can be filled anywhere helium is available. Small helium tanks for home use are also available from many department and variety stores such as Costco, or Toys R Us. To find a source of helium for your saucer or blimp balloon, look in the local telephone directory under Balloons, Balloon Delivery, Florists, Gifts, Helium, Hobbies, or Hobby Shops, and Party Supply Stores. Many retailers will fill your saucer or blimp for a nominal fee using their large helium tank at their location.

The supplied 38" round balloon or the 52" Blimp Balloon has a self sealing valve. Once inflated with helium, the balloon will remain inflated until natural leakage of helium occurs. This balloon will hold helium fill for approximately 2 weeks before needing a refill. The helium in the balloon will gradually leak out over time, and the balloon will begin to sag after several days. When the balloon is sagging a bit, the saucer/blimp will look a bit "baggy" but it will still fly very nicely. If you desire, you can add a small amount of helium to the sagging balloon to restore its firmness.

To fill, insert the nozzle of the helium tank into the opening of the balloon's "tail". There is a small circular opening in which you slip the nozzle of the helium tank. Carefully insert the nozzle approximately 1/2 inch into the balloon, pinch the balloon tightly around the nozzle, and slowly open the valve of the helium tank. Take care that you do not puncture the balloon. The helium will enter the balloon, but the self sealing valve will prevent the helium from escaping. It will take about 2 minutes to fill the balloon with a small helium tank. When filling with helium, try to fill the balloon so that it is quite firm and full, but be careful not to burst it by over inflating it. When the balloon is full, be sure to hang on to it, it has quite a bit of lift!

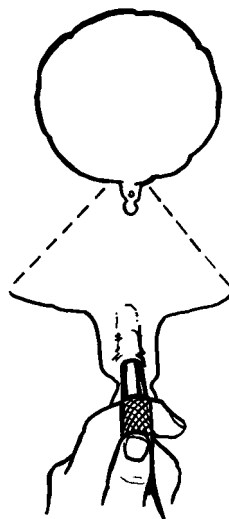
This balloon is very durable and can be refilled many times. If you would like to deflate the balloon for storage, you may do so by inserting a small plastic straw into the balloon self sealing valve approximately 6 inches and allowing the gases to escape from the balloon. Insert the straw carefully into the valve so as not to puncture the balloon. You can speed the deflation of the balloon by gently squeezing the balloon with the straw inserted into the self sealing valve.

ATTACHING THE TRI-TURBOFAN UNIT TO THE BALLOON

Hold down the inflated balloon on the floor or table and place the turbofan unit in the approximate center of the balloon. It is a good idea to place the filling valve of the balloon towards the rear for orientation in flight. The battery compartment on the Tri-Turbofan will be the "rear" of the aircraft.

You can fasten the Tri-Turbofan to the balloon by using Cellophane (Scotch) tape, Velcro strips will also work well for holding the turbofan to the balloon - two strips will do the trick on the front and back edges of the turbofan.

If your Tri-Turbofan came with a Blimp shaped balloon, you will also have 4 styrofoam blimp fins that are attached to the rear of the blimp balloon. The fins are attached by bending the small tabs 90 degrees alternately, and then taping the tabs of the fins to the inflated blimp balloon with cellophane tape.



ATTACHING BALLAST CONTROL PUTTY

Supplied with your airship you will find a small piece of plasticine putty which is used as a ballast weight. A "ballast" is a weight control device that is used to create an equilibrium in the upwards lift of the balloon and the downward force of gravity.

After attaching the Tri-Turbofan unit to the inflated balloon, insert a quantity of the ballast putty into the ballast pod on the front of the Tri-Turbofan. The ballast pod is the rounded front part of the Tri-Turbofan unit. Ballast weights such as plasticine putty and small coins can be slipped into this ballast pod while the unit is attached to the balloon with velcro or tape by leaving a small area near the ballast pod of the Tri-Turbofan unattached to the balloon.

Let go of the saucer briefly, and observe whether it has achieved neutral buoyancy, or whether it rises or sinks. If it rises, more ballast putty is added bit by bit until neutral buoyancy is achieved. You may add a few coins or paperclips for extra ballast weight if needed. If it sinks, ballast putty is removed bit by bit until neutral buoyancy is achieved.

After achieving neutral buoyancy, fine adjustments may have to be made by adding or removing small pea sized pieces of the ballast putty so that the saucer is hovering at a level altitude - Neither rising nor falling.

Achieving neutral buoyancy should only take a minute or so, and will need to be repeated if you move the saucer to a new location or building. Ballast adjustments are usually made every day due to minute leakage of helium from the mylar balloon - This helium leakage is normal, and cannot be prevented. One helium fill will last approximately 2 weeks, this may vary according to your local atmospheric conditions. When the balloon begins to sag, you may add a "top up" fill of fresh helium and continue flying. If the saucer or blimp balloon does not have enough lift after a few weeks of usage, even after adding a "top up" fill of fresh helium to the balloon, the helium may be contaminated with air. Deflate the balloon (by inserting a drinking straw through the valve) and refill it with fresh helium.

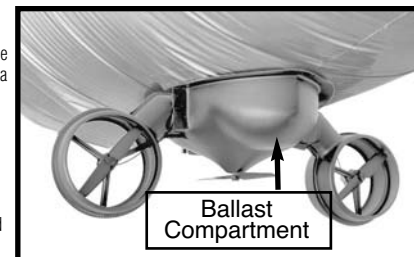
OPTIONAL ACCESSORY ITEMS!

Add the PTV wireless videocam!

The round "pod" at the front of the Tri-Turbofan Gondola can be used to carry Plantraco's PTV wireless video camera - instructions for installation are included with the PTV wireless video camera. Install one and get an aerial view of the crowd from the perspective of your Tri-Turbofan Blimp. You must set up your Tri-Turbofan with the blimp balloon in order to lift the extra weight of the PTV wireless videocamera - Ask your dealer or visit our website to order.

Telecommander Computer Interface!

The Tri-Turbofan Airships use the same radio control transmitter as Plantraco's Desktop Rover miniature tracked vehicle. This transmitter is ready to be connected to your PC or Macintosh computer with Plantraco Telecommander Software and Interface Cable. If you are interested in experimenting with robotic control systems, our Telecommander Software is a great way to start learning about how your computer can send commands to your Desktop Rover and Tri-Turbofan Airships - All from your computer console and even over the internet! For Urgeeeks and Mad Scientists only!



PILOTING YOUR SAUCER

Flying the Tri-Turbofan Saucer and Blimp can be both easy to learn and challenging to master!

The best way to learn to fly the saucer is to just get out there and have fun. After a few minutes you will understand how propeller thrust affects your airship, and you will be wanting to fly an obstacle course around your living room. The controls are situated so that pushing the two transmitter sticks forward causes the saucer to thrust ahead. Pulling both sticks backwards will cause the saucer to thrust backwards. To turn right or left, you may push one stick forwards by itself and the craft will turn the opposite direction of the stick you are pushing forwards - ie: pushing the right stick forwards will cause the saucer to rotate and turn to the left. Sharper turns can be achieved by reversing one motor while forward thrusting the other. To gain altitude, push the middle stick forwards, this causes the central fan to thrust the airship upwards. To go down, (descend), push the middle stick down. Ballast can also have an effect on rate of climb - setting neutral buoyancy is very important to an enjoyable flying experience.

PILOTING TIPS

Most new pilots tend to use too much thrusting power when beginning to fly and find that they are crashing into walls and generally losing control of the saucer or blimp. When learning to control the airship, it is best to use the thrusters conservatively. A one second burst of the turbofan will cause the saucer to move for several seconds. If you use longer bursts when you are just learning to fly, you will always be overcorrecting the course of the saucer. The best method of learning to fly the saucer is to use short bursts of power and then observe the saucer to see how it reacts to your control. Envision a NASA Astronaut controlling his jetpack during space walks on shuttle missions - the same methods of control apply to the Tri-Turbofan! Try to imagine that you are inside the saucer and facing forwards from the saucers viewpoint - this helps to keep track of Right and Left. Eventually when you are a seasoned pilot, the sky is the limit in what you can do with your Tri-Turbofan Airship!

AERIAL SPORTS AND COMPETITION!

Aerial Obstacle Course

- Test your skill in maneuvering your saucer by seeing how quickly you can fly a course around objects in your living room! For example, you could have a timed race to a houseplant and back. Use a wristwatch to time each run.

Aerial Sumo Wrestling - Aero Derby

- Fly two blimps or saucers at once, and have a "Smash Up Derby In The Sky"
- Race two saucers at once on a flight course of 3 laps around a room. Bumping each other out of the way is allowed! The first saucer to complete the course wins the race! This is a lot of fun - especially if you like competition with your friends!
- Make a small hook with a pipe cleaner and attach to the Tri-Turbofan so it hangs down a few inches from the front of the gondola - clear of the middle propeller. Try to fly the airship so that the hook can pick up a small folded paper man, or other pick-up targets you can make from styrofoam and other household items. Set up a "Rescue" mission on the coffee table! A Real Challenge!

Create Your own Flying Games -The Sky is the Limit!