Foamflyer's RC Airplanes
RC on a Budget

It has been said by *idiots* that "If you can't afford to throw $400 in the trash can, you can't afford to fly electric!" If you believe people like this, then navigate away from this page and go play golf or something. Anyone can enjoy RC planes with minimal cost. How can you enjoy RC planes on a budget?

Function vs Quality

There are lots of very high quality airplane kits, motors, electronics, and other parts available, but what level of quality do you really need? Imagine you work at a factory and are in charge of product development. Would you find all the highest quality raw materials and parts to use in your product, and pass the high cost on to the customer? What about starting with the lowest cost raw materials and parts, then increasing until your product fulfills its function? Most people don't want the highest quality because of increased cost. Most people want economy with a product that functions adequately. Why don't the Concorde supersonic transports fly anymore? Because people cared more about economy than flying really fast! There are many effective lower-cost alternatives, and yes, these products fulfill their intended mission very well, and last a long time if treated with care.

Shop Around

Whether it's at the biggest or most popular mail order place or your local hobby store, shop around. Sometimes buying online and paying shipping is less expensive than a local store. Sometimes the local store is cheaper, but you won't know unless you shop around! I recently needed a new ESC, and I found one at a local hobby store for the same price as a large popular mail order business. I'd rather pay $3 in sales tax than pay $8 in shipping!

Buy in Bulk

Why would anyone buy four bolts for $1.50? Usually buying in bulk is a better way to go. It might be a little higher cost up front, but the cost per unit could be substantially lower.

Reuse & Recycle

If each plane you build is going to have it's own electronics and radio system, then you'll either not enjoy very many planes or spend thousands of dollars. I only have a few radio systems I've accumulated over the years, and all my planes share just a few sets of servos and motors. If a plane crashes get everything you can out of it, such as pushrods, control horns, and plastic canopies.

"See" Parts in Everyday Items

Will that plastic bottle make a good cowling or could it be molded into a canopy? For slowflyers I now make control horns out of thin fiberglass sheet I got for free. There's lots of ways to save money in this area with a little creativity!

Treat Stuff with Respect

If you mishandle equipment, like overcharging battery packs or running motors at too high voltage, they won't last long. You'll find yourself buying replacement stuff too often.

Self-Discipline

If you're a "gotta have it" person who needs to purchase every new gizmo that comes along, that's fine, but don't complain about how expensive it is. Do you really need that stuff?