



WEEDHOPPER 440

The **RED BARON**

The quintessential FAR 103 ultralight



INTRODUCTION

Over 14,000+ Weedhoppers have been sold and is popular because it offers people an inexpensive way to fly for pleasure. An American classic gentle flying [high-wing](#), [tractor configuration](#), [tricycle gear](#), stick controlled [ultralight aircraft](#), The Weedhopper was originally engineered during the height of the 1970s ultralight boom and introduced in 1977 and continued to dominate the market for decades.

It's designer, John Chotia, worked at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration before turning to designing for the new FAR 103 category - Ultralight Flying Vehicles. He wanted to bring flying to everyone with a plane that can be quickly assembled and flown from just about any field with its short takeoff and landing capabilities.

The Weedhopper intentionally differed from most other ultralights of the period as others were wire braced with weight shift control whereas the Weedhopper was designed using airplane engineering protocols to be a strut braced aircraft that incorporates a more traditional control stick which moves the rudder and elevator, giving the pilot two axis positive hand on command of pitch and yaw.

The Weedhopper is prized, especially by beginning and recreation loving pilots. Due to the line of sight freeing high wings with purposeful [dihedral](#), and the swept back [leading edge](#), results in a very stable banking, self leveling, clear view, easy-to-fly and easy-to-land aircraft.

Constructed from aircraft grade aluminium tubing and covered with industry long proven pre-sewn [Dacron](#) envelopes. The production versions offered the Rotax 277 28 hp and later the Rotax 447 40 hp powerplants while the desirable [1000 Hour TBO Kawasaki 440](#) and 340 became available in aftermarket.

If a hanger isn't available or desired, the aircraft can be easily disassembled and put on a trailer or stored in a typical home garage.

Specifications

FAR Part 103 ultralight

- **Crew:** one
- **Length:** 18 ft 6 in (5.64 m)
- **Wingspan:** 28 ft 0 in (8.53 m)
- **Height:** 6 ft 9 in (2.06 m)
- **Wing area:** 168 sq ft (15.6 m²)
- **Empty weight:** 250 lb (113 kg)
- **Gross weight:** 550 lb (249 kg)
- **Fuel capacity:** 5 US gallons (19 litres)
- **Powerplant:** 1 × [Rotax 447](#) twin-cylinder, two-stroke aircraft engine, 40 hp (30 kW)
- **Propellers:** 2-bladed [Powerfin](#) ground adjustable
- **Cruise speed:** 55 mph (89 km/h, 48 kn)
- **Stall speed:** 20 mph (32 km/h, 17 kn)
- **Never exceed speed:** 65 mph (105 km/h, 56 kn)
- **Rate of climb:** 1,000 ft/min (5.1 m/s)
- **G Rating:** 8 Gs. (California State Polytechnic University)

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With robust updates, the Weedhopper originally sold as a kit for \$7,995.

(It would be over \$20,000 today.)

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