While leading a class looking at plant succession on the shore of Lake Michigan one fall afternoon, Bob Remedi came across a dense population of ladybugs (four species identified: Cycloneda munda, Harmonia axyridis, Hippodamia convergens, Hippodamia spp.) about 3 meters above the water line. While I assumed this dense population was the result of a food or mineral cache deposited on shore, I found that “washups” such as this have been documented in the literature and are believed to be caused by storms or on-shore winds, and often kill the ladybugs which are then found floating dead in the water. However, we encountered most of the critters alive, thus encouraging an interesting conversation about the cause of this phenomenon. Although commonly called ladybirds or ladybugs, these insects are actually beetles in the family Coccinellidae. Most of these beetles are predatory and are known as members of the family Coccinellidae. In search of a Better Bean: A Simple Activity to Introduce Plant Biology
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