PWS is proud to announce its new faculty member - Dr. J. Ryan Stewart!

Ryan Stewart, who has roots in Salt Lake, but grew up in Layton, Utah, recently joined the Department of Plant and Wildlife Sciences as an associate professor with the primary responsibility to help make the already successful Landscape Management degree program the best in the nation. He will be responsible for teaching Herbaceous Plant Material (PWS 210) and Plant Growth and Reproduction (PWS 301). He is very excited about being immersed in the institutional culture at BYU that strongly encourages and supports undergraduate education. Ryan earned his undergraduate (Agriculture Systems Technology) and master’s (Plant Sciences) degrees from Utah State University, and then went on to Iowa State University to earn his doctorate in Horticulture. Prior to being hired at BYU, he spent six very enjoyable years as a faculty member at the University of Illinois in the Department of Crop Sciences.

Ryan’s teaching and research interests are in all things horticultural. For example, he currently leads a multi-institutional, USDA-funded project investigating the environmental and economic sustainability of biocontainers that could be suitable alternatives to containers made from petroleum-derived plastic. However, he also conducts research on potential bioenergy crops. While at Illinois, he did ecological research on *Miscanthus x giganteus*, which is a hybrid originally found in southern Japan, and its parent species. Interestingly enough, much of the research was and is being conducted in Japan. Although he still plans to continue doing research on the *Miscanthus*-dominated
grasslands in Japan, he is positioning his program at BYU to focus on crops more suitable for the semi-arid conditions of the Intermountain West, such as native salt-tolerant species and possibly even agave and cacti species.

Family life is very important to Ryan. He married a wonderful woman from American Fork, Utah, who is named Aimee. They have five children, four girls and one boy. When free time pops up from time to time, they enjoy playing, reading, and talking with each other. His kids, who are accustomed to the relatively flat terrain of the Midwest, are particularly looking forward to becoming more familiar with the mountains (which, surprisingly, while on trips visiting extended family, a couple of them have thought would fall on them when they were younger).